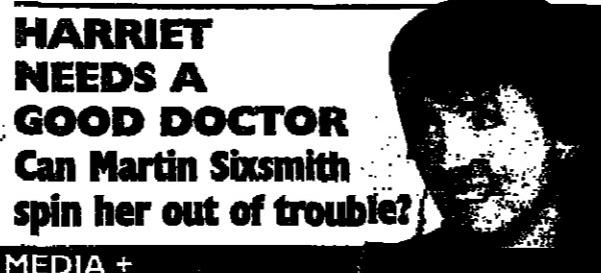
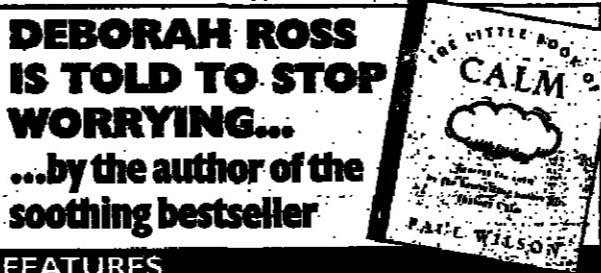


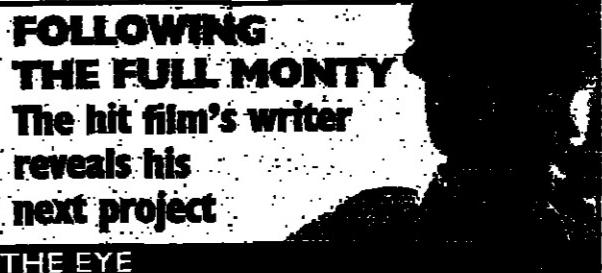
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FEATURES



THE EYE

# INDEPENDENT

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Newspaper of the Year for photographs

## Labour to put up prescriptions

### Exclusive

By Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

PRESCRIPTION charges will be raised by 15p to £5.80 from April despite urest on the Labour back benches over government proposals to reform the welfare state.

It is the first increase in prescription charges since

Labour came to power last May and is likely to lead to criticism that the charge is now so high that it is hitting those on low incomes who do not qualify for exemptions.

Labour repeatedly attacked the Tories for raising prescription charges as a "tax on the sick" throughout their 18 years in office from 20p to its present level of £5.65.

Frank Dobson, the Secretary of State for Health, is hoping the

criticism of the increase will be muted as it is below the 3.6 rate of inflation, and in line with last year's 15p increase by the Tories.

The rise in prescription charges under pressure from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, will intensify the pressure on Mr Dobson to sweeten the pill by announcing the restoration of free eye-tests and free dental check-ups in the summer after a fundamental review of all

NHS charges – which are a highly sensitive issue for the Government.

Labour avoided making any pledges to cut prescription charges in its general election manifesto, after abandoning earlier commitments to abolish them, but Mr Dobson ran into flak last year when he was unable to rule out new charges because of the comprehensive review.

The review will be looking at

cutting the exemptions to prescription charges, which include all pensioners, those on income support, those receiving jobseeker's allowance, children and pregnant women.

Better-off pensioners could be required to pay for prescriptions, which may be means-tested and limited to those who are on low incomes.

Ministers have privately ruled out introducing charges for visiting the GP, although it

was supported by a majority of family doctors in an attempt to cut out time-wasting by patients.

Also ruled out are hospital "hotel" charges to pay for bed and food.

Mr Dobson said Labour would not break its manifesto pledge to provide health care "available to all, according to need, free at the point of use". Charging for visits to the doctor would have broken that promise.

Charges are an important part of the NHS budget. The prescription charge raises around £310m a year, but is heavily outweighed by the bill for free prescriptions, which amounts to around £1.3bn. Around 80 per cent of all prescriptions are free, because they are covered by exemptions.

There will also be fears among patients' groups that increasing the charge could encourage more prescription

fraud. Alan Milburn, the health minister, has announced a crackdown on prescription charge fraud which is costing the National Health Service an estimated £100m a year, but it has now emerged that the majority of the fraud is caused by patients claiming they are on income support. This may suggest that they cannot afford the charges, even though they do not qualify for free prescriptions.

Leading article, page 16

## Army major accused of spying for the Serbs

By Marcus Tanner

A BRITISH army major is under police investigation for allegedly spying for the Bosnian Serbs amid claims his arrest was prompted by the CIA.

Martin Bell, the independent MP for Tatton, yesterday said Pentagon pressure lay behind the arrest by Ministry of Defence police of Milos Stankovic, 35, a member of the Parachute Regiment. Mr Stankovic allegedly passed top-secret NATO plans to Ratko Mladic, the brutal Serb army chief who masterminded the massacre of the Muslims of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia 1995 and indicted for genocide by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

The investigation threatens to reopen many old wounds about the record in the 1992-95 Bosnian conflict of the British army, which both Bosnia's Muslim-led government as well as the Americans thought bent over backwards to curry favour with the Serbs.

Mr Bell said Mr Stankovic, who was arrested in October last year during a course at the army college in Bracknell, Berkshire, was the victim of an injustice that bore comparison to France's infamous Dreyfus case a century ago.

The MP said the Army had buckled under pressure from Washington to get rid of anyone serving in Bosnia who had family ties in Serbia. This, in spite of the fact that it was these connections that the Army had found useful in the first case. "Everything he was valued for, he was arrested for," he said.

"The original complaint comes from the CIA. The Americans weren't happy with anyone with a

family background in Serbia, even though his value to Unprofor [the UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia] was that he could get close to the Serb people.

"If he did any spying, it was for the British. In Pale [the Bosnian Serb capital] the Serbs said that he was a nice enough chap, but always remember, his loyalty is to his Crown and his regiment".

Of Serbian descent, Mr Stankovic was the Army's chief liaison officer in 1995 when UN peacekeepers and aid workers were taken hostage by the Serbs in 1995. The British UN commander General Rupert Smith removed him from his post in April 1995, apparently following complaints about his alleged outspoken support for the Bosnian Serb cause. He was, however, promoted from captain to major on his return to the UK and was also decorated for his Bosnian service.

Mr Bell said his arrest was a poor reward for someone who had played a part in getting the Bosnian Serbs to unlock food convoys to besieged towns. "He helped to fix up the ceasefire in Bosnia in 1994," he said. The MP said the Americans had been "angry" that the then British commander of UN forces in Bosnia, General Sir Michael Rose, had someone of Serb descent at his right hand. The MP added: "In four months they have failed to find anything. His career has already been ruined by the mere fact of the arrest".

Mr Stankovic – his army career in tatters – is now living with his mother in Cornwall. Dana Stankovic told reporters her son would like to discuss the case but was prohibited from doing so.

MIS embarrassed, page 9



Rallying call: Countryside supporters walking up Piccadilly to Hyde Park yesterday when almost 300,000 protesters arrived in London in more than 2,000 coaches and 29 special trains; it took five hours for all the marchers to leave the Embankment after the official start just before 10.30am. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

## Good women make men behave badly – Straw

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

BOYS and men across the social spectrum are acting like the hapless characters in the television comedy *Men Behaving Badly* because they cannot cope with the greater success of girls and women. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary said yesterday.

"Some men find it really very difficult to cope with the fact that women are now increasingly on an equal footing," Mr Straw told Alastair Stewart on GMTV's *Sunday* programme. "And they cope, as it were, cope badly, but try to cope with that by acting the goat, by

being the fool, and you see this in schools and in families as well, where some boys almost give up on trying to keep up with the girls."

"I think that's a really serious social problem; and it's one, by the way, which is classless."

Mr Straw said: "It's worth remembering that the main characters in *Men Behaving Badly* are, as it were, middle-class lads who are dumbing themselves down."

His own view was that the programme, which he found entertaining, mirrored what was happening in society. "There's certainly something quite wor-

rying about what is happening in schools and in families as well, where some boys almost give up on trying to keep up with the girls."

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rying behaviour..."

"Why do girls do better? I think that they are more willing to accept the authority of teachers in school; they're more eager to please their teachers; and there are people, I'm not sure about this, who see reading as something that appeals more to girls and women than to boys and men."

Mr Woodhead also accepted that there was a greater degree of coarseness within society at large, citing the example of the *Dixon of Dock Green* presentation of an idealised view of the police in the Fifties, when he was growing up, compared with *The Bill* today.

"It's very much gritty, documentary, lowest common denominator realism," Mr Woodhead said. He felt that such things were influential. However, he added: "On the other hand, I do think we have to keep things in perspective; this laddish culture thing."

The shepherd in Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* said: "I wish there were no age between 10 and 23, because young men get wenches with child, upset the ancients, stealing and fighting." Mr Woodhead added: "Four hundred years ago, the same problem. So I think we've got to keep these things in perspective."

### Today's news

**Kohl's challenger**  
Germany's popular politician, Gerhard Schröder, won the Social Democrats nomination as their candidate to fight Helmut Kohl. Page 11

**Threat to Winnie**  
Nelson Mandela is fighting to evict his ex-wife Winnie from their former home which she has turned into a lucrative museum. Page 12

**5 facts**  
about Louise Woodward

- 1 This is the first time a woman has spoken at the Conservative party conference.
- 2 On the same day, 27, she will appear before the Royal Commission on the Environment to answer questions about her environmental policies.
- 3 If she wins, she will be the first woman to become prime minister.
- 4 If Louise loses the referendum, she faces a minimum jail sentence of 10 years.
- 5 There are 10,000 British citizens like Louise working as nannies in the United States.

tonight at 7pm  
on **5**

PEOPLE LIFE NEWS



# Bodyguard who must dive for cover from the media

WHEN Trevor Rees-Jones made his first, faltering steps into the full glare of the media spotlight as he left the Pitie-Salpetriere Hospital in Paris last October, it seemed somehow appropriate that he was wearing sunglasses.

The former member of the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment with a degree in sport and biological science had been a member of the so-called Payed protection team since 1994 and so a studied anonymity had been part of his stock in trade. Publicity was something he had learnt to avoid, but now everyone knew his name, and more particularly everyone wanted to know how much he remembered of that fateful summer night in Paris that killed the Princess of Wales, her boyfriend Dodi Fayed and their driver.

Five months on from his release from hospital, Mr Rees-Jones still bears the scars of his horrific injuries, most strikingly a five-inch welt which meanders from his left nostril across his cheek, but his health has improved remarkably. He has returned to light duties four days a week at Harrods and friends in his home town of Oswestry say that he is hoping to begin playing for the local rugby team again in September.

The real fight that Mr Rees-Jones now faces is in fending off the media and attempting to return to his former anonymity. It could be a long fight, for, as *Mirror* editor Piers Morgan put it on Saturday, "This is no ordinary Trevor. This is the most famous Trevor in the world."

To be honest, one struggles to think of any competition in terms of world-famous Trevors, but you catch Mr Morgan's drift. His purple prose was all part of talking up the "exclusive" interview with Mr Rees-Jones which begins today in his newspaper. In three interviews with Herve Stephan, Mr Rees-Jones had told the judge investigating the accident that he was unable to recall anything about the actual crash on 31 August last year. However, at a meeting with his psychiatrist last Wednesday, Mr Rees-Jones remembered "a little more" (his own words). Later the same day, he was interviewed by Piers Morgan at Harrods.

Mr Rees-Jones was in hiding yesterday after making a statement via his REES-JONES UNDERCOVER

Trevor Rees-Jones served at least one tour of duty in Ulster and was awarded the General Service Medal with Northern Ireland clasp. A friend who served with him said: 'We had some hush-hush jobs, the sort of things we are never allowed to talk about.'

## IN THE NEWS

### TREVOR REES-JONES

solicitors stressing that he had not received "one penny piece" from the *Mirror* newspaper for the interview nor had he granted them any form of exclusivity. He also expressed his concern about previous articles in the press which had criticised his professional conduct on the night of the crash and had suggested that he was not properly trained for his role. "These allegations are wholly spurious and I will, as and when I think it appropriate to do so, make public comment," his statement said.

According to Mr Rees-Jones, the *Mirror*'s claims about exclusivity have caused him and his family "great personal difficulty". One wonders, therefore, why he spoke to them at all. Which is where Mohamed al-Fayed comes in.

Recently, Mr Fayed gave his own interview to Mr Morgan in which he presented his somewhat eccentric version of events surrounding the accident. This included his claim that a nurse at Pitie-Salpetriere had passed on to him the Princess of Wales's final words and his belief that the Mercedes was deliberately forced off the road.

Mr Fayed's involvement in this latest turn of events has been described as "massive" and it has even been alleged that he was present during the interview. Since Mr Fayed is not only Mr Rees-Jones's employer but also paid his medical and psychiatric bills, some have suggested that, for the second time in six months, the latter has found himself stitched up, this time metaphorically.

For the moment, the man they called "Dodi's shadow" is keeping a low profile. However, he says he will be leaving his secret hiding place in the near future in order to have a further meeting with Judge Stephan and inform him of his latest recollections. One hopes he takes his sunglasses with him. He is going to need them.

Tim Hulse



Scarred but healing: Five months after being released from hospital Trevor Rees-Jones is back at work

**TREVOR'S TONGUE**

It was widely reported in the days immediately following the accident that Rees-Jones had lost his tongue in the crash (or "his tongue was ripped out in the horror", as the Sun put it). This of course was not the case, but he did undergo a ten-hour operation to rebuild his jaw and for a time it was feared that he would not make a full recovery from the serious facial, head and chest injuries he had suffered. The fact that he did has much to do with his extremely high level of fitness. As one former army friend puts it, "Trevor is as strong as an ox". According to his father-in-law, he is "a very fit lad".

**TREVOR'S DOUBLE LIFE**

The extent of Rees-Jones's former anonymity is illustrated by the fact that only his closest relatives knew what his job was. Team-mates at his local rugby club in Oswestry thought he worked for a London security firm and had no idea that he jetted around the world as Dodi Fayed's minder. "God knows how he could have worked with Princess Diana not let on," one of them commented. Rees-Jones was considered to be the life and soul of the party at Oswestry Rugby Club, but he never talked about his job. "Trevor is a very confidential guy," says one of his friends.

**ME AND MRS REES-JONES**

Rees-Jones was simply Trevor Rees until 1995 when he married his wife, Sue, and added her surname to his. The pair had met during their time at Fitzalan School in Oswestry. Mrs Rees-Jones was once a buyer for Harrods and now runs a kitchen and gift shop in the town. By last June the marriage had hit a rocky patch. Rees-Jones's wife had asked him for a quickie divorce and he had moved out of their luxury home in Whittington, Shropshire. Nevertheless, his wife immediately flew out to be at his bedside after hearing news of the crash. She told reporters, "I'm very fond of Trevor and will give him my full emotional, moral and any other support I possibly can during his recovery from his awful injuries." Ironically, surgeons used photographs from Rees-Jones's wedding as a guide when they were rebuilding his face.

# Gifts for godchildren in Princess's will

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE PRINCESS of Wales's will – posthumously altered to ensure that her 17 godchildren and her former butler benefit – is expected to be published today.

The change to her will, made after she died in a car crash in Paris, will ensure that the butler, Paul Burrell, whom she described as her "rock", is among the beneficiaries of her £21m estate.

The posthumous amendment will also mean that her sons, Prince William and Harry, can inherit their share before they are 25.

The original will was made in June 1993 and was not changed when she and the Prince of Wales divorced three years later. She had left her estate to be divided between her sons equally, with no account taken of the fact that Prince William will inherit the throne.

Last December, however, solicitors acting for the executors and Prince William and Harry obtained a court order to vary the will, and a posthumous amendment was added to the

original document to reflect the Princess's love for her godchildren.

A spokeswoman for the Law Society said posthumous changes to a will were not uncommon. "It happens quite often and as long as all the beneficiaries agree with the changes then it can be done," she explained.

"It sometimes happens when, for example, the children of someone who has died want to give something to someone who was very close to the deceased but who was not mentioned in the will."

It is thought that three-quarters of the Princess's estate will go to her sons, Prince William, 15, and Prince Harry, 13, will also receive the stake in Spencer House in London, which their mother shared with her sisters Lady Sarah McCorquodale and Lady Jane Fellowes, her brother Earl Spencer, and a group of trustees.

The 18th century house, which overlooks Green Park, is now a museum and art gallery, and is also used as a banqueting suite. The will will be available from the Principal Registry of the Family Division at Somers House in London for £5 by post – and demand is expected to be huge.

The Princess's most senior aide, Michael Gibbons, said yesterday that her sons would be "very distressed" by an attack on the Princess by the rock star Noel Gallagher.

In an interview with a local

paper in Australia, where Oasis are on tour, Gallagher said: "So she died in a car crash, big deal."

Using a flurry of obscenities when referring to the national outpouring of grief, the Oasis star is reported to have said: "Fat \*\*\*\*ing British housewives are a pathetic bunch of \*\*\*ers, do you know what I mean?"

"Half the people there probably wouldn't visit their grandmother's grave ... so she died at a dinner party at his London home on Saturday night. He died shortly afterwards from a suspected heart attack."

His earlier work in his own country arguably touched even greater heights, winning him mass public acclaim as Ireland's most subversive wit, but also eventual disapproval from faint-hearted media management.

In Ireland many felt *Father Ted* sometimes reflected a sharper mirror-image of today's Catholic Church than the rosier *Ballykissangel*.

Ted Crilly was by turns devious, cunning and disingenuous.

Echoing the sex and embezzlement scandal involving the Bishop of Galway Eamon Casey, he was once reminded by fellow Craggy Island exile Father Dougal that parish funds had been traced back to

# Ireland mourns comic talent as 'Father Ted' actor dies, aged 45

By Alan Murdoch



Dermot Morgan: 'A prince'

rest of my life," he said in an interview days before he died.

"Ted's been a great door opener for me and I'll miss him and certainly working with such a great cast, but I have to branch out."

He spoke vaguely about having projects in the pipeline and a possible return to the comedy circuit.

"There's a great buzz about stand-up. I've always loved it and that's hard to turn your back on. But if a straight role came along I'd never say never."

The sitcom, which has turned the unprepossessing curse of "feck" into a common catchphrase, is shown and loved in 10 countries and numbers Steven Spielberg and Madonna among its fans. U2's Bono requested a part in the series.

Father Ted's success was some consolation for the sacking of *Scrap Saturday*, Morgan's hugely successful Irish radio satirical show, scripted jointly with his equally politicised collaborator Gerry Stenham.

Its finest moments came in the public pretensions of Charles J Haughey to international statesmanship, while hinting dangerously at seamy

business links and the then-premier's abundant sexual appetites.

Morgan had an uncanny ability to get inside Haughey's head. The character's private utterances to his trusty lackey, press secretary PJ Mara, enabled Morgan to glory in Haughey's every intonation and belligerent prejudice. The character became part-Napoleon, part-Godfather, and imperious symbol of the nation.

Morgan/Haughey would thus describe his nearest neighbours to as "a nation of nobodies driving around the English Midlands on Sunday afternoons in their Austin Allegros".

And venturing into distant Sligo grubbing for votes, Morgan/Haughey asked: "How come all my people look retarded, Mara?"

The current Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern (himself satirised mercilessly by Morgan), said yesterday that he was deeply shocked by the performer's death and called him a "Prince" among modern Irish comedians.

He said: "Dermot was one of the greatest entertainers ever produced by this country."

Obituary, page 18

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Jeff in 1520

# County set bring the country into town



Time out: Countryside marchers taking a breather in Hyde Park during yesterday's mass protest

Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

"I wear as much dead animal as I can," said Natalia Cassell, sporting leather boots, coat, gloves and white Arctic fox.

The 25-year-old step-daughter of Baroness Mallalieu, the hunt-supporting Labour peer, was standing on a wall at Hyde Park corner with the fox draped around her shoulders.

"It was my grandmother's," she said, "so if I didn't wear it it would mean the fox's death had served no purpose. Generally, people have liked it, but I did have a woman come up to me in the park and call me a filthy slag."

Ms Cassell, a member of the Bicester Hunt, and her friends were anxious to get across the need for fox-hunting as a necessary part of country life.

"What about the employment it provides?" she asked. "Without it, thousands of people's jobs would be wiped out overnight. There are farmers who earn only £7,000 a year but get a fair cottage. What would happen to them?"

Her friend, Nick Morrey, a

They came to campaign for their licence to kill.

**Steve Boggan**  
followed the hunt

dandy 26-year-old wearing a Bertie Wooster-style suit, cravat and python-skin shoes, agreed. "We are sick of being lectured on the countryside by people who know nothing about it," he said. "People who hunt are also people who care for and look after the countryside. What would happen to the horses, the dogs and the people who work for hunts?"

It was clear, however, that Mr Morrey did not rely on the hunt for a living. When asked what he did, he sniggered and replied: "Ah, nothing really."

All around them the marchers flowed like lava in their tens of thousands. It was a gathering of the most dreadful old buffers and young fogeys of upper class twits of the loudest kind, where appalling dress sense was *de rigueur* and class-consciousness was compulsory.

It was also a gathering that could not be ignored because

of its sheer size and conviction. And it was an occasion that will stay in the memory for its peacefulness and warm atmosphere. There was something mildly amusing about country folk taking their litter home with them.

Brass and pipe bands led the masses through Piccadilly and past supporters on the balconies of the most exclusive clubs. Huntsmen blew into their horns, eliciting huge cheers from their followers.

Huntspeople and farmers and countryside employees from Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England streamed along the route for five hours. And all the time, only a handful of anti-hunt protesters dared shout at them.

Others, however, had a cheekier idea. They hijacked the frequency on which the Countryside Alliance's "March FM" was broadcasting for the day and drowned out the signal with their own in many parts of London.

Calling themselves the Hunt Saboteurs Broadcasting Corporation, the hijackers replaced the pro-hunting station with music from a DJ who, in the best traditions of the countryside, shouted: "Fuck off our land. Now!"

## Ministry to be set up for rural matters

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

Exchequer, is planning an additional "green tax" on petrol.

Dan Norris, Labour MP for Wansdyke, told BBC1's *On the Record* programme yesterday: "I hope the Government - when they are thinking about green taxes - just recognise the particular needs of the countryside, because any sort of across-the-board taxation that tries without taking into account the particular needs of rural communities will be very unwelcome, and very unjust."

But speculation that it will be called the Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs has already been rejected by ministers - because ministers feel it smacks too much of the country romps described in author Jilly Cooper's best-sellers.

The new ministry has been under consideration for some months, and it is not a reaction to yesterday's march.

It is expected to take in a number of responsibilities from other departments, particularly John Prescott's Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), and *The Independent* has been told that Mr Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, is "relaxed" about an improvement in countryside responsibilities.

Gavin Strang, the transport minister in the DETR, touched on one of the areas that could move into the new department at the weekend - rural transport - when he said that better traffic management measures were needed for the countryside. "In the coming months," he said, "we want to see work start on a handful of local schemes, across the country. These might include speed limits and traffic-calming features, parking and access controls, new ways of consulting local people, and provision for cycling, walking and horse riding."

Mr Strang also accepted the dependence of country-dwellers on their cars - lending weight to a campaign by rural Labour MPs for next month's Budget to provide relief for their constituents if Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the

Environment, is planning an additional "green tax" on petrol.

Dan Norris, Labour MP for Wansdyke, told BBC1's *On the Record* programme yesterday: "I hope the Government - when they are thinking about green taxes - just recognise the particular needs of the countryside, because any sort of across-the-board taxation that tries without taking into account the particular needs of rural communities will be very unwelcome, and very unjust."

Michael Meacher, the environment minister and the only minister to join the countryside march, told LWT's *Jonathan Dimbleby* programme yesterday that ministers would listen to and learn from the evident concerns of country people.

He also said that he was looking for "conciliation" on any legislation that might be introduced against fox-hunting.

There were "particular issues" about hunting that could be changed, but Mr Meacher added: "I accept the point that it is a conservation issue. If you were to ban fox-hunting, you've still got to cull foxes. They do a fearful lot of damage to livestock and in other ways, so it's a genuine conservation issue in the countryside. I accept that."

William Hague, the Conservative leader, who was also on the march, was Paddy Ashdown of the Liberal Democrats - said that ministers should carry out more U-turns following last week's announcements on greenfield development and the right to roam.

"We are having a debate about all this on Tuesday in the House of Commons," he said. "I hope the Government will be able to announce then that they can take more notice of people on the march."

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# Whisky, wellies and a rural invasion

By Steve Goodwin

THE Highland Park whisky splashing into the plastic beaker and across my hand was an early sign that this was no ordinary coach trip. In an "Up for the Cup" mood an unpretentious corner of rural England was coming to town with a message.

The farmer's wife dispensing the scotch had been on a march before. "I went on an Aldermaston march in the early Sixties. I got a clip round the ear from my father and I've never been on a march since," said Wendy Clulow. With their dairy farm taking a hammering as milk prices fall and fall, the one-time teenager disarmer decided it was time to protest again.

For the 54 folk on the coach, this rural rising had begun at 8am in a yard near Leek, in Staffordshire. For farmers, the day had begun a few hours earlier, tending stock and often handing over to a labourer brought in for the day.

Mick Heath of the village of Heaton, had to help a cow give birth to a calf in the early hours. He reckoned it had cost him at least £100 to get away for the march, a tidy sum when you are farming at a loss.

The passengers were a cross section of rural Staffordshire, including staff from the Leek livestock market. The hunting set was barely represented on our NFU-organised coach - though we passed a score with hunt posters on the motorway - but their cause is keenly supported. One of the banners which most delighted the Leek group read: "Eat British Lamb - 50,000 foxes can't be wrong."

For Neil Perkins, 26, a mechanic travelling with his wife,

the weather would have been just right for a day's shooting. He would have been doing a bit of pest control, shooting crows and magpies. Like most of his fellow passengers Neil believes that if hunting with hounds was banned, the animal welfare people would turn on shooting next.

But for all the serious message they were bringing to town - Neil cannot afford to buy a house in his home village because outsiders have pushed up prices - the mood on the bus was buoyant, with banter and occasional boos, in full flow.

The scale of the invasion started to dawn as we reached west London. Buses were backed up at junctions and hundreds of marchers were queuing for tickets at Shepherd's Bush and White City tube stations.

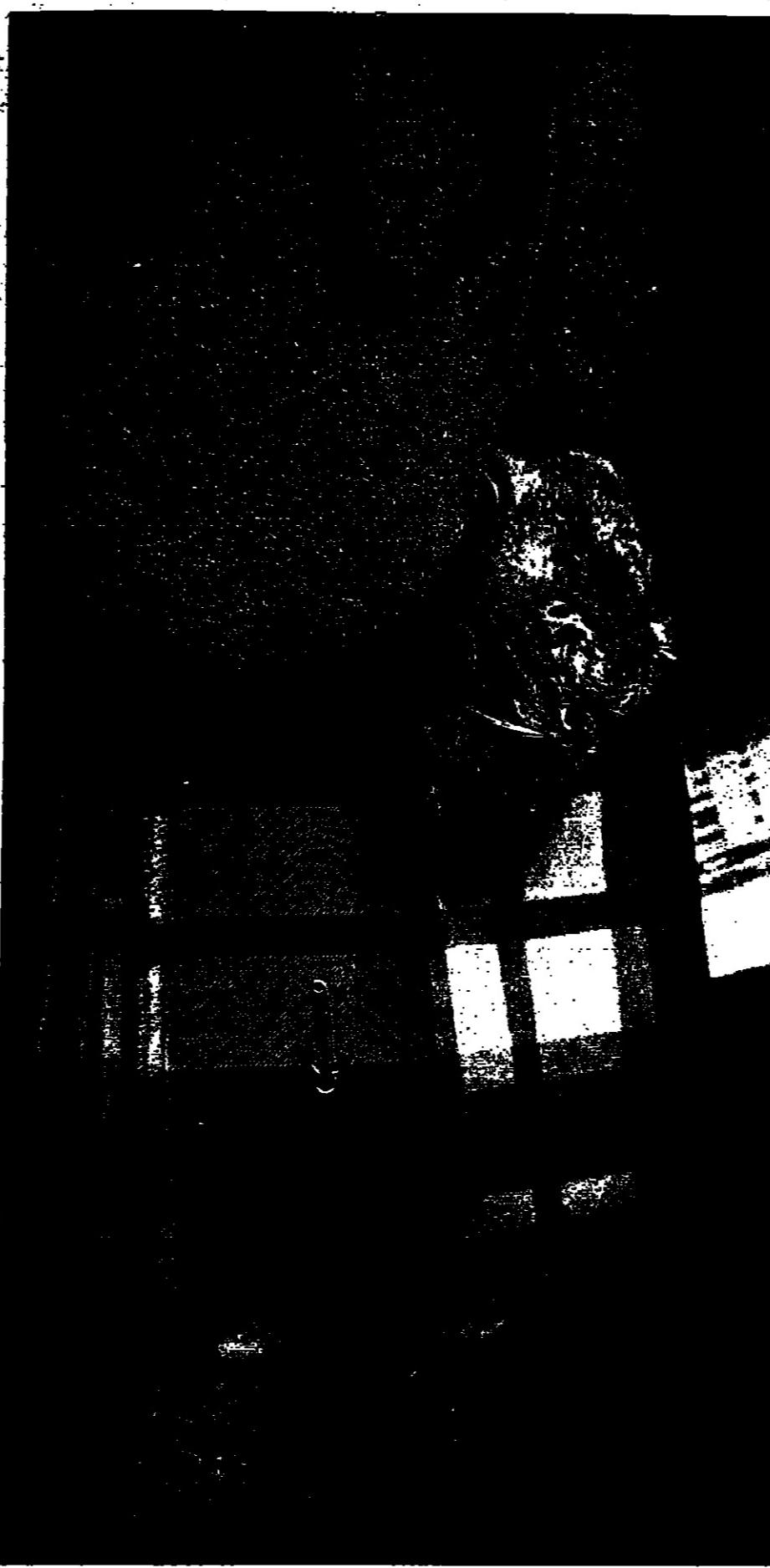
Cultures were clashing. On the Central Line, smartly casual Londoners eyed their country cousins with curiosity but wisely hid any amusement over the Wellington boots and flat caps. Despite the media clichés, the Barber jacket is not uniform countrywear and when a farmer wears one it is a worked-in, lived-in sort of thing unlike its urban owned counterpart.

"Bloody hell, it's like Alton Towers," was the booming reaction of one of our party gawping up the escalator at Holborn station. We shuffled into the moving mass near the Temple and moved on to the Embankment. Around 3pm a marshal announced it was only 400 yards to go to the start of the march and hours more to Hyde Park.

Goodness knows when they got back to the coach and those bottles of scotch that one hard-pressed hill farmer had stashed on the luggage rack.

For point: A countryside supporter sporting a dead wild cat from Scotland while marching to Hyde Park in London yesterday

Photograph: Brian Harris



## Country folk rally to defence of their rural traditions

Steve Boggan hears the marchers' point of view



Paddy Sweeney, 77, from North Yorkshire



Maureen Burgess, 51, from Childdrey, Oxfordshire



Nigel Murch, 48, from Ramsbury, Wiltshire

"I am not afraid to speak up for hunting despite the fact that all my life my job [as a vet] has been to treat and cure animals. If hunting were banned, I believe foxes would be extinct within 100 years. At least the hunts have an interest in trying to preserve them and their environment."



Lucy McMillan-Scott, 24, from London



John Biron, 40, farmer from East Sussex



Margaret Tabor, 78, farmer from Essex

"People don't think of the effects of a hunting ban. My daughter runs a small feed company of five people. If there is no more hunting they would go out of business. Five more unemployed people in a small community can have a serious impact."

"Surely this is all about personal liberty and freedom of choice. I do not hunt but I would defend the rights of people who do want to."

"I voted Labour at the election and now I'm beginning to wonder whether that was a mistake."

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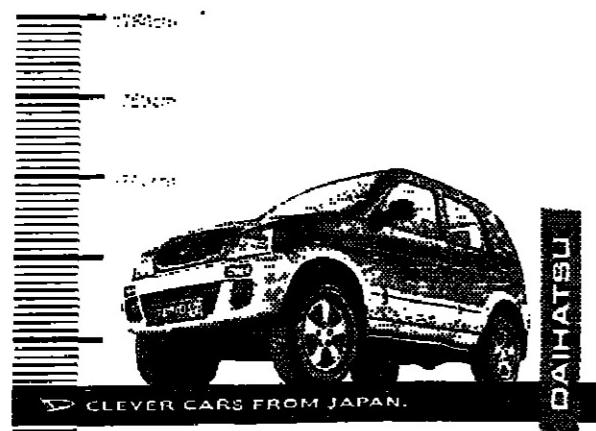
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**The new Terios.**  
A small car  
to look  
up to.

## Hepatitis fears grow at clinic

By Ian Burrell

HEALTH officials have now confirmed eight cases of the potentially deadly hepatitis B virus among alternative medicine patients who were treated with a fashionable but controversial form of acupuncture.

A further 80 patients who are all known to have had the treatment, known as haemotherapy, at the critical period are being asked to submit blood samples for analysis. The blood will be sent to the Public Health Laboratory Ser-

vices in London which will oversee the testing.

The *Independent* revealed last month that an urgent investigation had begun when three patients were found to have contracted hepatitis B after attending an alternative medicine clinic in north London.

The patients had undergone haemotherapy, which involves the patient's blood being extracted and then re-injected in a saline mixture through a hole caused by an acupuncture needle.

The Finchley Alternative

Medical Centre, which is at the centre of the scare, has agreed to stop the treatment after being visited by officials from the Health and Safety Executive.

Officials from the Barnet Health Authority, north London, last week wrote to the 80 at-risk patients, who live in 26 different health authority areas across Britain. All the patients, who will be contacted via their GPs, will be sent information about hepatitis B, a virus strain which causes a potentially fatal infection of the liver and has a fatality rate of

between 6 and 20 per cent, compared with 1-2 per cent for Hepatitis A. Although the patients may not be showing any symptoms, the virus can have an incubation period of more than 100 days.

Many of the patients attending the clinic were seeking a cure for allergies. One London man, who is now in a Hertfordshire hospital suffering from hepatitis B, was hoping to be rid of a condition which caused his tongue to swell, restricting his breathing. The man's family said he was

now concerned that he may have been put at risk of contracting the HIV virus.

Other infected patients live in Birmingham, Oxford and Derbyshire.

A spokeswoman for Barnet Health Authority, said that evidence collected so far indicated that patients did not need to be tested for HIV. But she added: "However, we cannot rule that out absolutely. It might well be an issue they want to discuss with their GP."

The spokeswoman said that officials were not expecting

the results of the blood tests to be ready for several weeks.

Meanwhile, the practitioner at the centre of the hepatitis B scare, Dr Madhusudan Shrivadikar, has tested negative for the virus. A founder member of the Commonwealth Institute of Acupuncture and Natural Medicine and a former hospital doctor, he is co-operating fully with the inquiry.

"Lots of people are ill. I think it's an epidemic," he said last week. However, he said that the health authority had asked him not to discuss the matter.

By Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

## Leylandi cancer hope

NEIGHBOURS fight protracted court battles over it, spending thousands of pounds in legal arguments about its right. It can grow by three feet a year and reach 60ft before stopping.

However, scientists in Manchester think it may be time to start being nice about leylandi, the fast-growing cypress plant widely blamed for blighting properties and blocking light. For they think the plant may contain a cure for cancer.

Dr Nick Lawrence at the chemistry department of the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology (Umist) has already carried out preliminary tests which show that in test-tubes, extracts from the plant can kill off cancer cells.

Now he needs more samples to find out exactly what the compound is, and whether it might have therapeutic properties which could be exploited for future disease treatments.

However, the last thing he wants is for every embittered householder gloowering in leylandi shadow to hack it down and send it to him. Not yet, anyway.

"Yes, this is the plant that neighbours fight wars over," he said. "Our early tests using about a kilogram of plants gave interesting results. But we ran out of materials, so we've been looking for more."

In the tests, the plants are crushed and the extracted juices applied to cell cultures to see what effect they have. A university worker spent the weekend collecting 10kg of leylandi. "If the extract has value as a cancer treatment, then we would need tons of it," Dr Lawrence said. The answer should emerge in the next six months.



Winter sports: Children pulling toboggans up a hill on Town Moor in Newcastle upon Tyne yesterday, with their parents following, ready to make the most of a snowfall, revealed after early-morning fog lifted  
Photograph: Stuart Outterside

## Why science is going down the Tube

By Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

TRAVELLERS on the London Underground will probably look more confused than ever from today. After the success of Poems on the Underground, a new poster series is aiming to prompt commuters into doing something they are usually reluctant to do on a train: think.

The series of four posters on 4,000 advertising sites will each pose a scientific problem to think about - such as will a snowman melt more or less quickly if you put a coat on it?

But the new programme, which will continue with new sets of puzzles over the next two years, is only an indication of the way that science is gaining a growing audience among the public.

Next week sees the launch of *Tomorrow's World*, a glossy magazine which builds on the BBC TV series, first transmitted more than 30 years ago.

"It will appeal to a broad cross-section of both men and

women aged 15 to 54 who are fascinated by the universe and our impact on it," said Stuart Snaith, publishing director for the magazine.

Certainly, the indication is that the interest is there: 13 million viewers watch *Tomorrow's World* or *Horizon*, 3.9 million people pick out science and technology stories in newspapers and magazines, and the BBC *Tomorrow's World* exhibition last month at the Birmingham NEC attracted 44,000 visitors over its five days.

The posters on the London Underground are being sponsored by the drugs company Glaxo Wellcome, the Institute of Physics, and Copus, the Committee on the Public Understanding of Science - which has in the past found that while people are eager to read about science, their understanding of it, and ability to apply its principles, can be woefully lacking.

A recent Copus survey found that a significant percentage of people believe that radioactivity can be removed from water by boiling (it can't; only time can do that) and that humans lived alongside dinosaurs (they are separate by at least 60 million years).

However, the Underground

Food for thought: One of the posters that will be appearing Underground

specified, giving instead the clues that people need to reach a conclusion - with the proviso that "it depends..." because in science, few issues are as clear-cut as people would like.

\* The key issues are air temperature and insulation. To reach your answer, ask yourself - what would make the snowman melt faster? Does putting a coat on it have that effect?

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Woman not alone: Louise Hayman, The Independent's in-house lawyer, dressing to please herself

Photograph: Brian Harris

## Female lawyers told dress holds you back

By Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

FOR ANY woman wondering why they have not got to the top of the legal professions, at last there may be an answer: it could have been that cardigan you once wore.

Despite the fact that in the last few weeks both the Lord Chancellor and the Attorney-General have faced accusations of operating "old boy networks", the Solicitors' Exhibition sponsored by the Law Society Gazette has come to the conclusion that the real problem that holds women back in the law is the way they dress. This comes just days after a landmark case in which a judge was found guilty of sexually harassing his pupil.

While women make up more than half of all admissions into the legal profession, there

are 30 per cent less likely to get to the top, according to a recent survey. The Law Society's Research and Policy Planning Unit reports that since 1987 the number of female admissions has risen by 100 per cent compared with only 59 per cent amongst men. Yet of solicitors who have been in practice for between 10 and 19 years and are

now partners, 87 per cent are men and 63 per cent women. "We believe that visual imagery has a major influence on professional acceptance," said Nigel Stevens of Nationwide Exhibitions. "Producing a credible image from the female wardrobe is an important issue."

To help with that "credible imagery", Mr Stevens has

produced a list courtesy of image consultants The House of Colour. Women should avoid open necks, perfume, dangly jewellery, cardigans, double pierced ears and bare legs. They should always wear make up and never let undied hair roots show.

However, according to Mary-Ann Stephenson of the

Fawcett Society, "It's distractingly attention from what's really holding women back. The problems women solicitors have are because of discriminatory attitudes ... Women should not have to feel they are blame."

Last week a judge was found guilty of sexually harassing a woman trainee barrister in a landmark ruling. It is the first

time a female pupil has brought such a charge. Senior barrister and part-time recorder Christopher Sutton-Mattocks, 46, was brought before the Bar's disciplinary tribunal and fined £500 for persistently harassing Claire Kavanagh, 25, at his London chambers.

The week before Josephine Hayes announced she was suing the Attorney-General John Morris over claims of sex discrimination. And two weeks earlier the Lord Chancellor was accused of operating an illegal old boys' network by solicitor Jane Coker.

"Yes, we agree men should be changing their attitudes," said Christine Windsor of the House of Colour. "But ... women can control how they present themselves and everyone makes judgements on the person. That's just the way it happens."

### 'What is so evil about a shortish skirt?'

NOW AT last I have been told where I have been going wrong all these years: why criminals have turned up their noses at my legal services and business clients have spurned me for the more familiar arms of crumpled-suited chaps. It is the way I dress.

Organisers of the "Solicitors" exhibition opening tomorrow at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham have come up with a truly depressing photograph of the ideal for us to work towards. What is

so evil about shortish skirts or cardigans? Most top-class women solicitors I have come across have succeeded without any consideration for dress conventions. A brilliant, trailblazing partner at a top City firm was the unidentified subject of a management memo one summer. It denounced a woman who had been sighted in the corridors "half dressed". Eager searchers eventually detoured with the discovery of the corporate lawyer, bare-legged.

Some people – men – will always find threatening any woman who dresses in her own style and speaks her own mind. If what they want is Dolly the Clone, sitting in a formula suit, then they will get bovine passivity and sheepish advice.

I strive for Funky but Neat. I can do this as I work in the woman- and individual-friendly media industries. Out there they still burn tight-lipped women at the stake.

— Louise Hayman, *Independent* lawyer

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### Mowlam stresses urgency of Ulster referendum

Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, yesterday stressed the urgent need to put a settlement to the people of Northern Ireland before the province's volatile marching season gets under way.

She insisted the peace talks were on track for a 7 May referendum, although she conceded "a slight delay" was possible. "But further down the road we have the parades and I don't think anybody would want to hold a referendum during the marching season," she told the BBC's *On the Record* programme. "It is a tight timetable. But we are working very hard to get the legislation together and the electoral machinery up and running." Ms Mowlam added that she believed "real progress" had been made in the talks over the past week.

### Super-teachers for schools

The Government yesterday unveiled details of its proposals for a new grade of "super-teacher", which could attract salaries up to £40,000.

Advanced Skills Teachers would be the best in their profession, and the new grade would allow them to remain in the classroom, rather than switch to management in search of higher pay. David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, also intends AST teachers to spend at least a day a week in other schools, helping to spread their expertise. But the plan sparked a row with the teaching unions, who said it cut across salary differentials, and would create "divisions" in schools.

### Hillsborough families' war

Families of the Hillsborough Stadium disaster victims last night declared political war on the Government.

Members of the family support group, set up in the wake of the 1989 tragedy in which 96 Liverpool fans died, met at the club's Anfield ground for the first time since the Home Secretary Jack Straw ruled out a fresh inquiry.

Merseyside MPs will be the first to be targeted, with each being asked to sign a pledge of support and if necessary resign the Labour whip.

### Schoolgirls in boxing ring

A controversial boxing match between two schoolgirls, postponed from last year because of adverse publicity, is set to go ahead this week under a veil of secrecy.

The Amateur Boxing Association is believed to have imposed a press blackout before the contest between 13-year-olds Andrea Prime, from Leicester, and Emma Brammer in Stoke-on-Trent on Tuesday.

### Sacked major to appeal

A top soldier who accused the Army of being sexist, racist and snobbish said yesterday that he will "almost certainly" appeal against his discharge. Major Eric Joyce, 36, attacked his sacking as the most "spectacularly constructive dismissal this century. But recent developments he said were only "a temporary set back" and could not stop progress within the Armed Forces.

## Saudi king intervenes for jailed nurses

By Steve Boggan

THE Saudi Arabian royal family has taken personal control over the fates of two British nurses facing murder charges so it can avoid losing face while allowing them to return home.

Lawyers for Lucille McLauchlan and Deborah Parry expect the women to be freed "very soon" as a result of moves that will allow a humanitarian intervention by King Fahd.

*The Independent* learned that responsibility for the case against the women was taken away from the court of cassation three weeks ago and handed over to the ministry of the interior, headed by the king's brother, Prince Naif bin Abdul-Aziz.

He will make a recommendation to King Fahd which is expected to be favourable. Because the prisoners are women, because no other Saudis were involved in the case and because the matter is diplomatically sensitive, it is understood that the prince's recommendation will be for the women's sentences to be fixed at about the amount of time they have already served.

They are accused of murdering Yvonne Gilford, 55, an Australian colleague, at the King Fahd Military Medical Centre in Dammam in December 1996. They have always protested their innocence. The court found Ms McLauchlan, 32, guilty and sentenced her to eight years in prison and 500 lashes but no verdict has yet been passed on Ms Parry, 40. Under Saudi law, they could have been beheaded.

Responsibility for the case passed to the ministry of the interior because Ms Gilford's brother, Frank Gilford, signed

a death penalty waiver on the promise of £730,000 in "blood money". That took the matter away from the private domain of the families involved and into the public domain of the Saudi administration.

"That meant the case was passed to the ministry and it is being considered before a recommendation will be made to the highest authorities," said Salah al-Hejailan, the nurse's lawyer in Saudi Arabia.

"The maximum penalty the ministry could recommend would be five years but in this case it will be much less. I understand that because of the unusual circumstances of the case, because they are women, because Miss Parry is unwell and because no Saudis were involved, the sentence on both will be around one year. They will be going home very soon."

On Saturday, Grant Ferrie, who married Ms McLauchlan in prison last year, and Jonathan Ashbee, brother-in-law of Miss Parry, flew to Saudi. Last night, the women's families and British lawyers said they had heard nothing about them being sent home.

As reported in the *Independent on Sunday*, the expected conclusion of the affair has been achieved without paying the blood money to Mr Gilford. Mr Hejailan has refused to authorise its release, arguing that the amount is too high. Mr Gilford has offered to donate much of it to the building of a hospital department in his sister's name and expects to keep only £50,000 for himself.

However, Mr Hejailan said he had told Mr Gilford he deserved only half of it. "I believe the other half should go to the welfare of the girls," he said.

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# Hague hardens against the euro

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

WILLIAM HAGUE is edging towards outright opposition to the European single currency, arguing that it would be a step towards a European superstate.

The Conservative leader's current line is that the party will oppose the single currency at the next election - effectively ruling out membership for another nine years under the Tories.

The party has argued that the unknown economic consequences of membership need to be tested for some years before Britain joins up to the euro, while Labour is saying that it should be possible to form an economic judgement soon after the next election.

But the latest official Tory shift against the currency is being based on the argument that it would lead directly to a political superstate, with a massive loss of British political sovereignty - effectively putting a complete Tory block on membership.

In a speech on the constitution last week, Mr Hague said in a little-noticed passage that he would be making a further speech on the "far-reaching constitutional implications of

Britain's membership of the European Union" in May.

However, he also said: "We would well find ourselves some way down the road to a United States of Europe, with all that entails for national sovereignty and accountability."

That view has been strongly endorsed over recent weeks by some of Mr Hague's senior Shadow Cabinet colleagues.

Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, said in an official Conservative Party press release last Friday that the Government "have signed up to EMU [economic and monetary union, the single currency] as a political project to transfer more control over our affairs to Europe."

Michael Howard, the Tory spokesman on foreign affairs, said in another party press release last Monday that the "constitutional questions" about full political union were "at the heart of this decision. They cannot be ignored".

But the strongest line has been coming from John Redwood, the party's trade and industry spokesman, who recently had a press release repudiated by Mr Hague because it was offensive to the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

In another press release last Monday - again issued by Con-

servative Central Office, with leadership approval - Mr Redwood said that a single currency would be like taking out a joint bank account with the neighbours.

"A single budget leads to a single government," he said. "Once you have entered into your joint bank account with your neighbours, they control all of your finances, how much holiday time you can have, whether you can work overtime and how much you pay for food, goods and services. You have little control left over how you run your life."

In the end, Mr Redwood concluded, it would even become "pointless" to hold general elections. "No matter who you elected, they would still be only one voice among fifteen more in Brussels and your views would not matter very much."

"Your Members of Parliament would have no more power to influence your life than an opposition councillor on council with a built-in majority," he said.

The bank account image was pursued yesterday by Mr Lilley, who told Alastair Stewart on GMTV's *Sunday Programme*: "We don't want to merge our bank accounts with our partners."



Talking plans: Former prime minister John Major told Sir David Frost on television yesterday that he was ready 'to speak my mind' in the Commons

## Major prefers bench in Commons to seat on the board

By Anthony Bevins

JOHN MAJOR has turned down more than a dozen offers of company directorships since he left No 10.

The former prime minister said on BBC1's *Frost on Sunday* interview that he was hoping to accept one or two offers

"because they are of great interest that will take a very small amount of my time". But he added that as MP for Huntingdon, "I intend to play a full part in the House of Commons ... I have turned down a number of - I think about 15 - non-executive directorships."

Mr Major said: "I thought

a period of silence after the election was both prudent and necessary, but I now propose to speak my mind whenever I feel the need to do so in the House of Commons."

He said he expected he would stand at the next election, but added: "I haven't definitely decided that I will do so." But

he ruled out any possibility of returning to office. "I don't think I'm going to get back into government again," he said.

Mr Major said Tony Blair had made fundamental errors on the economy. "What we have now seen is that because of those tax changes, because of the five interest rate-rises we

have had, you now have an extraordinarily high rate of exchange for the pound sterling that is beginning to cause real pain for manufacturing industry," he said. His view was that Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was building up a war chest of cash for pre-election bribery of the voters.

## Scottish parliament in search of a seat

By Kate Watson Smythe

SCOTLAND'S first parliament for nearly 300 years could spend the first two years of its life in Glasgow before moving to a permanent home in Edinburgh.

The new parliament comes into being in 2001 after elections next year, but its site at Holyrood in Edinburgh will not be ready until late in 2001.

The three buildings now under consideration are Strathclyde House, former home of the regional council in central Glasgow, and two other sites in Edinburgh: the Church of Scotland general assembly hall and the old Royal High School at Calton Hill.

Lord Steel, the former Liberal Party leader, said the proposed buildings were unbecoming to the dignity of

the new parliament. "To use an ex-council chamber outside the capital and borrow premises from the church cannot be the right start and I would say that MPs know the limitations of the Calton Hill," he said.

George Reid, the SNP spokesman on constitutional affairs, said he believed Calton Hill should be the temporary home. The church building was "impossible" in terms of office space and parking, and the Glasgow site was no more than a "sudden notion" by Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland. And he said the proposal to use the old council building "downgrades our national legislature by linking it to a defunct local authority".

A Scottish Office spokesman said the three temporary sites would all need some adaptation as none had enough office accommodation. The cost of the Strathclyde building would be £3m, £4m for the General Assembly Hall and £5m for the old Royal School, most of which would be rental charges. Mr Dewar is expected to announce his decision by Easter.

The situation in Wales is similarly uncertain.

With little more than a year to go before the first meeting of the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Office has yet to make up its mind where the assembly should be sited.

A spokesman for the Welsh Office said yesterday that Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, was expected to make his decision in the next couple of weeks.

"The choice is now between three or four sites in Cardiff and the Guild Hall in Swansea," the spokesman added.



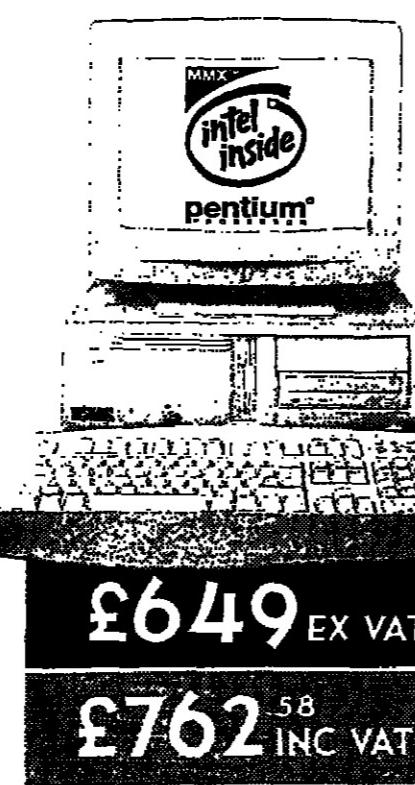
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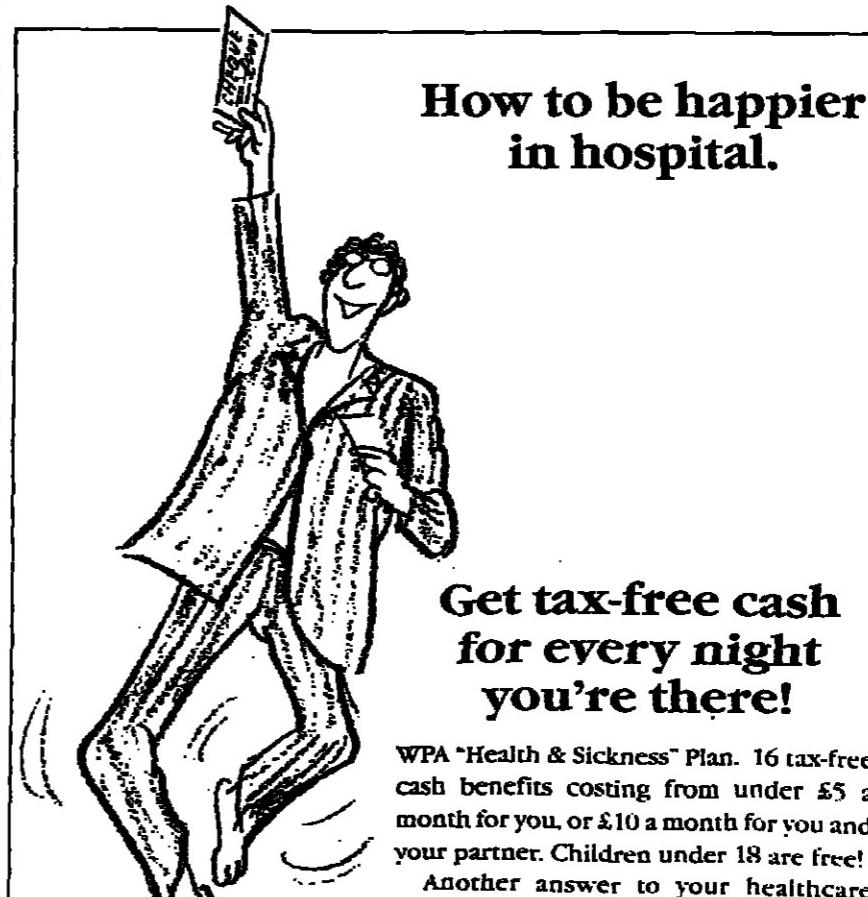
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# Spy's book tells MI5's embarrassing secrets

By Andrew Rosthorne  
and Steve Boggan

MIS BUGGED and tailed a Conservative MP who later became a cabinet minister, according to a potentially explosive book by former agent now living in Australia.

Anthony Holland, who describes his work as an MI5 and MI6 "asset", claims that the MP was targeted because he was thought to be having a gay affair with the Tory peer Lord Robin Maugham, nephew of the author Somerset Maugham.

If true, his revelations will further embarrass the security services and result in calls for tighter controls on their activities. Last year, the new Labour government was rocked to its core by the revelations of former MI5 officer David Shayler, who described surveillance operations on potential "enemies".

In Britain, his most audacious operation involved gathering evidence of the MP's alleged affair with Lord Maugham. He says the MP was regarded as a future minister and a potential security risk, although Mr Holland suspects the evidence was gathered to be used as leverage at a later date.

Lord Maugham, who was openly homosexual, died in 1981.

The book, which is known only as "Project 21" at Geoff Coxon Publishing in Melbourne, describes how two addresses in London and Brighton, East Sussex, were put under round-the-clock surveillance.

"By the time I joined the operation, most of the groundwork was done," Mr Holland says in the book. "They [MI5] had Maugham's flat bugged throughout and the telephone tapped, and they had two miniature television cameras wired into the ceiling lights in the main bedroom and the lounge, so we could watch the show in comfort."

The former minister denied the affair when approached by The Independent this week. He said he had no knowledge of ever having been put under surveillance.

Other chapters include details of a spying operation that Mr Holland says he conducted on a German project to help Iran develop a nuclear weapon.

Mr Holland wrote the book as the latest stage in a campaign to clear his name of a crime he says he did not commit. He was jailed in 1981 at Bradford Crown Court for allegedly receiving stolen goods amounting to £250. He claims that he was framed by the security services.

Although it was his first offence, he was jailed for 12 months. Before his term was over, however, he was freed and sent to a new life in Australia, allegedly with the complicity of MI6. Melvyn Hodgson, the man he allegedly persuaded to steal for him, was found hanging in a prison cell in 1992.

His case has been taken up by Australian politicians and is being examined by the Crim-

inal Cases Review Commission.

Dr John Illingworth, a Leeds city councillor, has examined the evidence against Mr Holland and described it this week as "preposterous". He added: "I don't believe he would be convicted today. It is difficult to check the rest of the claims in the book, but those that can be checked are accurate."

Mr Holland said: "The only man who could clear me was Melvyn Hodgson because I believe he made a false confession. Once I heard he had been found hanging, I decided to blow the lid off these guys."

"I still don't know why they framed me, but I had been associating with a suspected IRA commander and perhaps they thought I was going over."

Once the book is published, I know I'll never be able to re-

turn to England. I just want to clear my name. I simply can't let them win."

Geoff Coxon, Mr Holland's publisher, is hoping to avoid the kind of legal fight that resulted in Peter Wright's book *Spycatcher* being dragged through the courts.

"If it is published in Australia, your Official Secrets Act does not apply," he said.

"We are publishing in Victoria, because in New South Wales truth is a defence, and we have gone to great lengths to prove the veracity of Anthony's claims."

"You might have a bit of difficulty getting it over there, but if it goes well, we hope to launch it on the American market next year."

The Home Office said it would not comment until it had seen the material. It never discusses operational matters.



Anthony Holland at home in Melbourne: "I just want to clear my name. I can't let them win" Photograph: Joe Mann



Peter Wright: Author of controversial *Spyatcher*

of the state" - who included John Lennon, several Labour MPs and a young Jack Straw, now the Home Secretary.

In Mr Holland's book, which is due to be published in the summer by a small Melbourne-based publisher, he describes operations in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Iran, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. Working as a freelance agent for MI5 and MI6, Mr Holland, 54, claims his real skills as an engineer allowed him to be placed in sensitive areas by the security services.

During one period in 1969, he was found a job at the Rossing uranium mine in South West Africa in order to find out whom it was supplying. He says he reported that it was producing the Israeli nuclear programme, and even describes

His case has been taken up by Australian politicians and is being examined by the Crim-

## DAILY POEM

**Those old songs ...**

By Edwin Brock

grow in the mind,  
their rhythms churning endlessly  
with the sound of feet walking  
or rain falling or being taken up  
by garden birds, one line at a time.

Landmarks, favourite stones,  
reminders of moments  
that only history makes important,  
we hum them down to immortality

so that now they fence us in  
with the faces of the lost opportunities,  
and all the moons and Junes that ever were  
are meadow-larking above England.

This poem comes from Ambit magazine's tribute to Edwin Brock, who died last year. Ambit 151 also contains new poetry and prose from (among others) Alan Brownjohn, Ken Smith and George Szirtes. Published quarterly, Ambit costs £6 for one issue or £22 for a year's subscription, from 17 Priory Gardens, London N6 5QY.

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## New tax credit could fail poorer families

By Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

POOR FAMILIES will not be helped automatically by replacing *in-work* benefits with a new system of tax credits, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation warns today.

At the moment, poorly-paid workers with children can claim family credit from the Benefits Agency. The working families tax credit is set to replace this with a tax rebate or reduction in tax liability

administered by the Inland Revenue. But the biggest potential advantages will come only if the Government commits extra resources to raise the minimum income of parents who work and reduce the rate at which benefits are withdrawn (known as the benefit tapers), the foundation says.

The JRF commissioned research from Australia, Canada and the United States which shows that tax credits can bring disadvantages as well as benefits to families, de-

pending on the detail of their design and how much money is spent on them. At present, the combined effects of income tax, national insurance and the benefit tapers can be to leave low-paid workers only 3p better off from every £1 of increased pay. The JRF calculates that on its own the 10p starting rate for income tax would do little to change this, with some low-paid workers still retaining less than 4p of every extra £1 earned.

In the US, Australia and Canada, maximum benefits are paid at a flat rate for

lower-earners and withdrawn relatively gradually. However, there is evidence in the US that the system creates severe disincentives to work as credit is withdrawn, and Canada has abolished its working income supplement scheme after finding that it reduced incentives to work twice as many cases as it improved them.

Fraud is also a serious problem in the US, with a high proportion of claims relating for children who do not exist or are being claimed for more than once. The re-

view warns that a tax credit in the United Kingdom might lead to collusions between employers and staff to reduce the level of declared income or companies might be tempted to reduce wages, because lost pay would be made good by the tax credit.

"A tax credit is potentially an attractive way of helping needy working families because it allows them to depend less on transfers from the state and more on their own retained earnings and makes it easier for them to escape poverty," said Donald

Hirsch, advisor to the JRF. "Even so, the unforeseen problems with tax credits in other countries including work disincentives and widespread fraud make it vital the proposed British system is carefully designed and that its operation is closely monitored."

He added: "Evaluation should not only look at the specific impact of the working families tax credit, but also how it interacts with other welfare-to-work policies for people on low incomes, including the proposed national minimum wage."

### Rantzen defends story on disabled patient

By Andrew Buncombe

Esther Rantzen, the television presenter and consumer rights campaigner, last night defended a controversial programme after it was criticised by watchdogs for being inaccurate.

The programme, part of the series *The Rantzen Report*, was broadcast in 1996 and claimed that the British Home and Hospital for Incurables (BH&H), in south London was neglecting one of its most severely handicapped patients.

Ms Rantzen said the programme, which examined the plight of Ian Parker, the disabled patient, had resulted in his being moved to another establishment. Her comments came after it was reported that the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) had said the programme was "inaccurate, misleading and unfair".

Concern about the programme was first raised by John Ware, a reporter for the BBC's *Panorama* programme, who wrote that the programme had twisted the facts.

Ms Rantzen, who was cleared following an internal BBC inquiry into the pro-



Esther Rantzen, whose programme about the British Home and Hospital for Incurables in London sparked controversy. Photograph: Hugh Dixon

gramme, last night insisted that her investigation into the hospital was justified.

"As far as I am concerned, I am extremely happy with the programme. The young man who was featured in it, Ian Parker, has now been transferred to a different hospital and his health has enormously

improved," she said. "That was the object his mother was intending and achieved by being interviewed for the programme."

"I was astonished by a report today that the BSC had reached these findings because as far as I am aware they have not yet been published."

A report in Sunday newspaper yesterday said the BSC had ruled that Ms Rantzen and her team were rather less than meticulous. It said the programme had wrongly claimed that Mr Parker had not been taken to a fete and said more investigation of the facts would have avoided the possibility of

a misleading picture of events. The report also stated that the commission attacked the use of a secret camera inside the hospital saying it was not justified and the programme should have "researched the story more thoroughly".

A spokesman for the BBC said that the programme had

### Childminders seek status

By Glenda Cooper

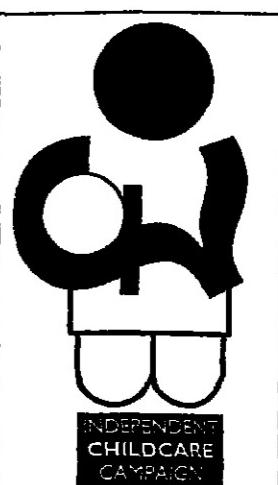
CHILDMINERS are calling on the Government to introduce national training and qualifications as part of the "national childcare strategy".

The National Childminders Association (NCA) will lobby the Government to bring in formal training which it says will raise the status of childminders who are frequently undervalued in their work.

"Far too often this is the sort of job people think they can do in between the housework," says Gill Haynes, chief executive of the NCA which has 50,000 members. "It is not. Looking after children is a demanding and skilled job. There is the underlying assumption that anyone who provides childcare is not doing a formal job and so doesn't need training."

At present, childminders are some of the worst-paid workers in Britain, with an average wage of £2 an hour.

"We want to give business support to what is a self-employed person running a small business from their home," said Ms Haynes. "Childminders are among the worst-paid workers in the world. Yet childminders offer care that is individual because they look after a small number of children. They often offer care that is continuous as well, looking after children before they are old enough to go to school and then looking after them before and after school."



"Our motivation is to raise the status of childminding as a major provider of childcare. The Government must have training and qualifications linked into national standards."

The NCA has helped set up a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in early years childcare. "The benefit to parents is that childcare becomes like any other profession with an NVQ assessment in competence, a measure which parents can understand," Ms Haynes said.

Training would include child development and learning opportunities in the home. The NCA has also set up a number of childminding networks with local authorities which not only offer quality assurance - a sort of kitemark for carers - but also back-up, for example if the childminders' own children are ill.

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# People's favourite selected to fight Kohl

By Imre Karacs  
in Bonn

**THE MOST POPULAR** politician in Germany was yesterday selected as the Social Democrat Party's candidate against Helmut Kohl in the federal elections in September.

On the eve of his party's formal nomination, Gerhard Schröder, 53, prime minister of Lower Saxony, passed the penultimate electoral test with flying colours. According to projections based on exit polls, his party won 47 per cent of the votes in yesterday's elections to the Hanover assembly, a gain of nearly 3 per cent.

It is the third time Mr Schröder has led the Social Democrats to victory in Germany's fourth most populous Land; each time with an improved score. In national polls, he is rated twice as popular as Chancellor Kohl.

It would be premature to discount Mr Kohl so early in the race. The exit polls showed the Christian Democrats had also improved on their result of four years ago, scoring about 38 per cent, up nearly 2 per cent.

For an election of such importance, the campaign was remarkable for its paucity of themes. In the shadow of Germany's record unemployment, nudging 5 million this month, the leading candidates wanted to talk of but one issue: joblessness.

Mr Schröder's rallies were festooned with slogans lambasting the government's poor record on jobs; stairways leading to the halls where the faithful gathered were plastered over with graphics illustrating the inexorable rise of unemployment in the 15 years of Kohl government.

In his speeches, Mr Schröder attacked the "laissez-faire" economics of Bonn, contrasting it

with his own brand of interventionism. Earlier this year, he sank more than DM1bn (£330m) of tax-payers' money into a local steelworks, snatching it from a perfectly respectable Austrian suitor. It was to ensure that decisions about local jobs were made locally. Mr Schröder argued, and he pledged to restructure the company and eventually re-privatise it.

Critics suspected a cynical ploy, however, motivated by short-term political concerns.

"Schröder saves jobs that aren't in any way in danger," said Christian Wulf, his Christian Democrat opponent. But the takeover appears to have served its purpose, polishing Mr Schröder's image as a hands-on manager who will go to any length to keep jobs at home.

Mr Wulf tried to counter the Keynesian argument by pointing out Lower Saxony's high indebtedness and poor employment record. But his campaign was on the defensive, because of the general feeling that Mr Kohl's lacklustre performance in Bonn was partly to blame for the country's economic malaise. His own prescriptions he could not advertise, for fear of offending his party bosses.

"My position is clear," he told journalists. "We are doing too little." When he was pinned down on specifics, Mr Wulf sounded more like his opponent than his mentor, Mr Kohl. The 38-year-old lawyer praised Tony Blair and the Dutch employment model, and gritted his teeth when asked to appraise Mr Kohl's economic achievement.

A superb organiser who rebuilt the party apparatus of his region after its first stunning defeat eight years ago, Mr Wulf has set his sights on the Chancellery, and is set to become a key player when the curtains finally fall on the Kohl era.



Playing to win: John McEnroe on stage with his guitar during a tennis rock-night in Rotterdam at the weekend, in advance of the city's 25th international tournament - which starts today

Photograph: Toussaint Kluiters/AFP

## Seven die as Kosovo is torn by violence

**PRISTINA (AP)** — SERBIAN police swept through ethnic Albanian villages in the troubled province of Kosovo yesterday, after clashes at the weekend left at least seven people dead.

Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Kosovo Albanians who want to secede from Serbia, appealed to the United States and the European Union to put pressure on Belgrade to stop police violence.

Mr Rugova said "urgent

measures" were needed to prevent the Serb attacks which are aimed at "humiliating and causing panic" among the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo.

At least two Serb policemen

were killed and another two wounded on Saturday, when their patrol was ambushed near the village of Glogovac, 12 miles west of province's capital, Pristina. In a subsequent action, the Serbian police said they had killed five Albanian "terrorists."

Ethnic Albanian sources said gunfire and explosions could still be heard yesterday around Glogovac and in nearby Serbia, the centre of ethnic Albanian disaffection in Kosovo.

The region is reportedly surrounded by Serb police forces conducting house-to-house searches. Tension has been high in Kosovo since Serbia revoked the province's autonomy and introduced virtual martial law in 1989.

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# Mandela takes the shine off Winnie's goldmine

By Mary Braid  
Johannesburg

ELSON MANDELA is challenging the right of his former wife Winnie to pocket the profits she is making from their former home in Soweto.

Since Winnie Madikizela-Mandela moved the humble residence she once shared with her ex-husband to the public eye months ago, it has proved a nice little earner.

Up to 1,000 tourists a day pay 5 rand (10p) a head to visit the little house in Orlando West while Mrs Mandela's sister runs an owner shop in the garage which sells beer from the garden in little bottles at a baron 10 rands.

The only problem is that Mrs Mandela does not own the house which she has moved into a museum. And now, according to the *Johannesburg Star* newspaper, President Mandela wants her evicted from the house which he as the rightful heir has donated to the Soweto Heritage Trust run by the township tourism officials

and big business. "The President has said we should evict her because he gave the house to the people," said an embittered Sydney Phuti, the trust's deputy chairman. "It's a sensitive matter. We do not want to get an interdict to remove her from the house. We are trying to negotiate."

Mrs Mandela has not lived in the Orlando West house for years.

She prefers her luxury house in Diepkloof, Soweto's answer to Beverly Hills, which was built by an American benefactor. But the plaque now bolted to the outside wall of her old home reads "The Winnie Mandela and Family Museum" — making no mention of her ex-husband from whom she was divorced two years ago.

Nthato Motlana, one of South Africa's most successful businessmen, has been called in to mediate.

But Mrs Mandela's lawyer, Ishmael Sebenya — who represented her in the recent public hearings into her alleged involvement in the murder of Soweto

activists in the 1980s — suggested Mrs Mandela will fight any move to take away her control of the museum. He claimed Mrs Mandela lodged papers to have the house changed into her name back in 1985.

An ugly legal battle looks likely as the house was, in fact, only registered in the President's name at the beginning of last year.

He had not owned the house previously because under apartheid blacks were denied the right to possess freeholds.

The house plays central role in the Mandela saga. The couple lived there in the late 1950s and it was from there that Mr Mandela went underground and Mrs Mandela, a decade later, was banished from Soweto to the internal exile in the Free State.

But the house is also tainted by scandal. In 1988, angry Soweto residents burnt the house down in disgust at the violent activities of Mrs Mandela's notorious group of bodyguards, the so-called Mandela United Football Team. It has since been rebuilt.



Happier days: Nelson and Winnie Mandela after his release from jail in 1990. They were to divorce six years later

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## Nigeria plays for status in Sierra Leone

By Ed O'Loughlin  
in Freetown

WHEN forces acting in the name of democracy overthrow dictators, the international community is supposed to applaud. But when a Nigerian-led peace-keeping force chased Major Johnny Paul Koroma's military junta from Freetown, the world responded with only a polite murmur.

Johnny Koroma's eight-month-old regime took charge of Sierra Leone in a military coup and had earned a reputation for brutality, corruption and theft. The trouble is, the same things are often said of Nigeria.

Under General Sani Abacha's military rule, Nigeria has killed or imprisoned hundreds of dissidents. The execution of the ethnic Ogoni writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow activists on charges of murder in 1995 was widely condemned abroad and prodded the United Nations, America and most Western countries, including Britain, into imposing limited sanctions.

But thanks to its ability to siphon off the country's massive oil wealth, Nigeria's ruling élite has felt able to defy the world. So, while no one mourns the passing of Major Koroma and his thugs, now on the run in the north of the country, foreign diplomats in the region say their governments feel unable to congratulate Nigeria too publicly.

Some worry that Nigeria's hard-headed rulers may well be after more than Brownie points in Sierra Leone, which is still the dominant political and military power in West Africa. Many diplomats now believe the Sierra Leone operation could be part of a move to strengthen Nigeria's strategic position.

The expansion of Nigeria's

military presence in Sierra Leone comes at a time when it is reducing its peace-keeping force in neighbouring Liberia. Originally deployed in 1990, the multi-national force from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) was dominated from the outset by Nigeria, which provided more than 10,000 troops. Sierra Leone has had its own peace-keepers from the group ever since the Liberian civil war spilled across the border in 1991.

Foreign observers believe this month's military offensive could have been intended to achieve several goals. Apart from securing a continued

Nigerian presence in the western tip of Africa, it reinforced Nigeria's standing as the big player in Ecowas. It handed a rare, if muted, public relations victory to the military government in Nigeria and won Nigeria intense popularity with the inhabitants of Freetown.

It may also have guaranteed Nigeria's military élite a say in the future exploitation of Sierra Leone's mineral wealth. Apart from big deposits of bauxite and titanium dioxide, the diamond fields around Kono are estimated to yield gems worth more than £150m a year.

The real question is how dependent the restored President Kabba will be on Nigerian soldiers to uphold his rule. Major Koroma's ousted army is already mounting bloody raids on the cities in the interior. According to Ecomog's Nigerian chief of staff General Abdu One Mohammad, the peace-keepers plan to pursue them into the bush and wipe them out.

"If you have a snake and you just hit the tail you are wasting your time," he said. "You have to hit the head as well."

## Forty arrested in Burma

Burma's military regime has arrested 40 people it accuses of planning to bomb government buildings and embassies and assassinate the country's leaders.

A government spokesman, Colonel Kyaw Thein, said yesterday that the plot was masterminded by the All Burma Students Democratic Front, made up of former students who fled the suppression of a pro-democracy uprising in 1988. Kyaw Thein, a member of the regime's information committee, told a news conference that the student insurgents were linked to the party of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

— AP, Rangoon

## UN chief pleads for Rushdie

Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said she raised the issue of the death order against British author Salman Rushdie in talks with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi. Mrs Robinson, in discussions this weekend with Mr Kharrazi and Iran's deputy minister for legal and international affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, said Rushdie's situation was the only specific case she had raised in talks on a broad range of human rights issues.

— Reuters, Tehran

## Sect seeks newborn sons

An ultra-orthodox Jewish sect is searching for parents willing to hand over newborn sons to be raised in isolation and purity in preparation for the rebuilding of Jerusalem of the Biblical Temple, which was destroyed in 70AD. Only members of the Jewish priestly caste need apply, the *Ha'aretz* newspaper quoted a leader of the Movement for Establishing the Temple as saying.

— Reuters, Jerusalem

# Tiananmen tyrant rises to the top

Terri Poole

Long

**P**ENG, the man who played a key role in crushing the Tiananmen demonstration in 1989, looks to take over as head of China's parliament despite protests from dissidents.

China have been mounting a drive across China against pro-democracy activists in the last few days after outspoken attacks on Mr Li. The outgoing prime minister imposed martial law and suppressed the pro-democracy movement. "He has the blood of people on his hands," an open letter from activists in Jiangxi province, two of whom have been questioned by police. "We call on NPC [parliament] not to vote him in as he already has a place in history of China's humiliation."

A petition signed by 56 relatives unknown killed in the 1989 shooting. "We earnestly ask the NPC membership review committee to qualify him." More than a dozen petitions have been issued this week. They demand reforms and a reassessment of the official verdict on the events of 1989 as "counter-revolutionary".

The parliament, which opens next week, will appoint Zhu Rongji, a chief economic policy-maker, the new prime minister and lay ground for big cuts in the civil service and government ministries. It is Mr Li's move to the membership of the parliament that is most controversial, because the appointment will be seen as a step backwards for any

chance of political reform.

Human rights groups in Hong Kong at the weekend said three more dissidents had been detained recently. In Shanghai police took away Yang Qinsheng and Zhang Ruijun, who signed a petition calling for the release of political prisoners.

Ma Lianggang, in the central city of Hefei, was picked up on Saturday. It was not clear if these arrests were connected with the alleged for-



LI PENG: Appointment has brought flurry of protests

mation of an underground political group opposing Communist party rule.

Fu Shenqi, said the "China Democratic Justice Party" had been set up with more than 100 members and five to 10 branches based in provinces and cities.

Mr Fu said the party had intended to meet in a northern Chinese city towards the end of February, but that the plan had been

scrapped after Wang Bingzhang, an exiled dissident who returned secretly from the United States in January to help set up the party, was arrested and expelled.

Security is so tight ahead of the People's Congress that it would be an extraordinary achievement to organise an underground group without tipping off the police. Tolerance for public political debate is at rock-bottom in China in the run-up to the meeting even though petitioning the parliament is - in theory - legal.

Under the constitution, Mr Li must step down as prime minister at this parliament after two five-year terms. But the hardliner will remain the second most powerful man in China's political hierarchy, and President Jiang Zemin has had to accommodate his demands for a significant new post. Mr Li's preferred choice was to be head of the NPC.

The outgoing chairman of parliament is Qiao Shi, 73, whose political career hit a brick wall last autumn when he was dumped from the politburo standing committee.

Despite his past role as China's top secret policeman, he was credited with building up the role of the NPC from that of a mere rubber stamp.

Resistance to Mr Li's appointment may be significant in the parliament itself, as delegates have become less compliant. At last year's NPC, about 40 per cent of deputies dared either to vote against, or abstain, on the report from China's top legal officer. A repeat rebellion against Mr Li's appointment as NPC head would be a huge loss of face.

## Taking tea in the town that's in the drink



Washed out: Women taking breakfast in a flooded street in Milagro in Ecuador yesterday. The coastal town is a sugar cane centre and it is feared the heavy rain attributed to the El Nino weather pattern may have destroyed the crop. Photograph: Andres Rondon/Reuters

## Suharto makes sure of his next election victory

By Richard Lloyd Parry

**S**HARJO, sole candidate for Indonesia's presidency, convened an assembly of tame supporters to re-elect him for his seventh consecutive term and with even greater powers than before. Despite presiding over the country's worst economic crisis for 40 years, President Suharto is certain of being elected for another five-year term by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) which meets in the capital Jakarta until the middle of next week.

Almost all the members have been chosen or approved by him, decision-making is by "consensus" rather than by voting and, in any case, he is the sole candidate. The only person to have declared her willingness to stand against him, the opposition figure, Megawati

Sukarnoputri, was ousted from parliament last year and is therefore disqualified from standing.

The assembly meets at a time of exceptional unease in Indonesia, which has suffered in the last seven months from an intensifying series of catastrophes - a currency crisis which has reduced the value of the rupiah by 70 per cent, forest fires, smog, drought, soaring inflation, mass lay-offs, aircraft crashes, food riots and the looting of Chinese shops.

If the election of the 76-year-old Mr Suharto, and his controversial choice as vice-president, the technology minister, B J Habibie, is not in doubt, the more pressing question is whether the MPR can carry out its ritualistic tasks without triggering popular opposition on the streets of Jakarta.

A Manila newspaper reported a conversation between President Suharto and the Philippines foreign minister in which the President expressed fears of a "revolution" if the price of rice rose further. Indonesia's South-East Asian neighbours are already said to be making plans for the possible expansion of Indonesian refugees if the food situation continues to decline.

Today, the former United States vice-president, Walter Mondale, will arrive in Jakarta as President Bill Clinton's personal envoy to Mr Suharto in an attempt to encourage political and economic reform.

Public demonstrations have been banned for the duration of the MPR's deliberations, which is likely to grant the President sweeping emergency powers.

Troops and personnel carriers are stationed outside the parliament building, and some 35,000 troops and police have been mobilised.

Also in question is the future of the \$43bn (£27bn) rescue package put together by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to stabilise the crippled economy. Even since it was negotiated last year, Mr Suharto has appeared reluctant to implement its measures, which are designed to increase competitiveness in a market hitherto dominated by a few rich businesses, many of them friends and relatives of the President.

"Despite the fact that we already have started to carry out clear and fundamental reforms and a restructuring program, there are no signs yet that the situation has improved," the Indonesian leader said in his televised speech to the MPR yesterday. "On the contrary, the people's life is becoming more difficult."

His latest idea, for a currency board which would peg the value of the rupiah to that of the US dollar, provoked deep unease at the IMF which threatened to suspend its aid if the plan was put into action. Yesterday, President Suharto announced a new plan, called "IMF plus" regarded by him and his advisers as "more appropriate" to Indonesia's problems, but unlikely to be welcomed by the international community. "If Suharto does not carry out the necessary reforms and stick to the plan," a US official told reporters last on Friday, "we will line up very strongly against the delivery of the next tranche."

## Saddam's honesty on weapons sites to be put to test

By David Usborne  
in New York

**T**HIS SINCERITY of Iraq's commitment to the new agreement on opening presidential palaces to inspections by United Nations weapons inspectors that for now has averted American and British military action in the Gulf could be tested as early as this week.

Richard Butler, the chairman of Unscoscom, the Special Commission charged with demanding Iraq's weapons programmes, yesterday said he was "just about to ready" to begin implementation of the pact that was negotiated by Secretary General Kofi Annan on a make-or-break mission to Iraq a week ago.

The United States has served notice that it wants the agreement tested as soon as possible. To do so, Mr Butler will only need to order an inspection of at least one of the eight presidential complexes that are at the heart of the deal with Iraq.

The Jordanian army was combed the eastern shore. On Saturday five of its officers crossed the water to inspect the cache. Their commander confirmed that the two forces were working together. This was welcomed by Israelis as a renewal of security co-operation facilitated by the resignation last week of the head of the Mossad secret service, General Danny Yatom, whom King Hussein blamed for the bungled attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader in Amman last September.

warned Iraq it would face the "severest consequences" if it reneged on the new agreement, has already been watered down. The latest text says instead that Iraq would face "very severe consequences".

Behind the seemingly petty squabbling in the Council, lie fundamental differences of view on how to handle Iraq. While the US and Britain are unrelenting in taking the toughest possible stance against Saddam Hussein, France, Russia and China are at every turn more flexible.

Specifically on this resolution, the latter three do not want wording that would open the door to automatic military action against Iraq were it to be found in violation of the Annan agreement. Any such action, they say, should be preceded by further consultations in the Council.

Asked by journalists yesterday about his progress on finalising arrangements for adding diplomatic chaperones to the regular Unscoscom teams, Mr Butler replied: "We are at work on that, and we are just about ready." He insisted that while diplomats would join inspection teams, the "hard edge" would remain the scientific and technical experts.

An opinion poll to be published today by *Newsweek* magazine shows broad approval among Americans of the deal struck with Iraq; 55 per cent said they considered the Annan deal "worth it". Even so, 61 per cent expressed the view that the agreement will not work in the long run.

## Israel fears Palestinians are stocking up arms for a war

**I**SRAEL suspects Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority is stocking up on weapons in case the failing peace process disintegrates into violent clashes between the two security forces, writes Erik Silver in Jerusalem.

Israel's suspicions were bolstered yesterday after Israeli soldiers captured a Palestinian smuggler ferrying two rubber dinghies of arms and ammunition across the Dead Sea from Jordan on Friday night. The massive haul included 60 Kalashnikov and M-16 rifles, seven hunting rifles, 39 pistols and dozens of boxes of bullets.

The Palestinian leader has

repeatedly threatened a return to armed confrontation if Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government fails to honour its commitment to hand over more of the West Bank to Palestinian rule. The paramilitary Palestinian police number about 30,000 men, but Israel controls the legal import of light weapons via Jordan and Egypt.

The chief of Israel's central command, Major-General Uri Dayan, said they were investigating the possibility that the consignment was destined for the Palestinian Authority. One officer said it was "too much and too well-organised" for mere criminals or Islamic extremists.

The smuggler came ashore at Ein Fashkha, 10 miles from Jericho, headquarters of the Palestinians' West Bank security forces.

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In New York this morning, meanwhile, the UN Security Council will attempt to resolve diplomatic differences between the five permanent members on a formal resolution that would give legal and diplomatic endorsement to Mr Annan's deal. An initial version of a text drafted by Britain, which

## Hindu hardliners lead in India poll

**N**EW DELHI (AP) — Officials yesterday carried sealed ballot boxes to heavily guarded locations across the country to prepare for the counting of votes for India's next government.

Counting begins today for most constituencies. Two exit polls released on Saturday indicated strong support for Hindu nationalists.

More than 300 million of India's 600 million voters have cast ballots in the election, which has been staggered over six days to give security forces time to move across a country where religious, ethnic and caste differences often erupt into violence.

Despite the precautions,

blood has been spilled on each of the four voting days since 16 February. Eight people were killed in election-related violence on Saturday, bringing the death toll to at least 76.

Voting ended on Saturday for all but six of the 543 contested seats in parliament.

First results are not expected until late today. No party is expected to win an outright majority in the powerful lower house of parliament. But a poll broadcast on the government-run television showed the Hindu BJP and its allies winning 244 seats, making gains in almost every corner of the country but still falling short of a majority.

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# M: Chasing gravity's rainbow

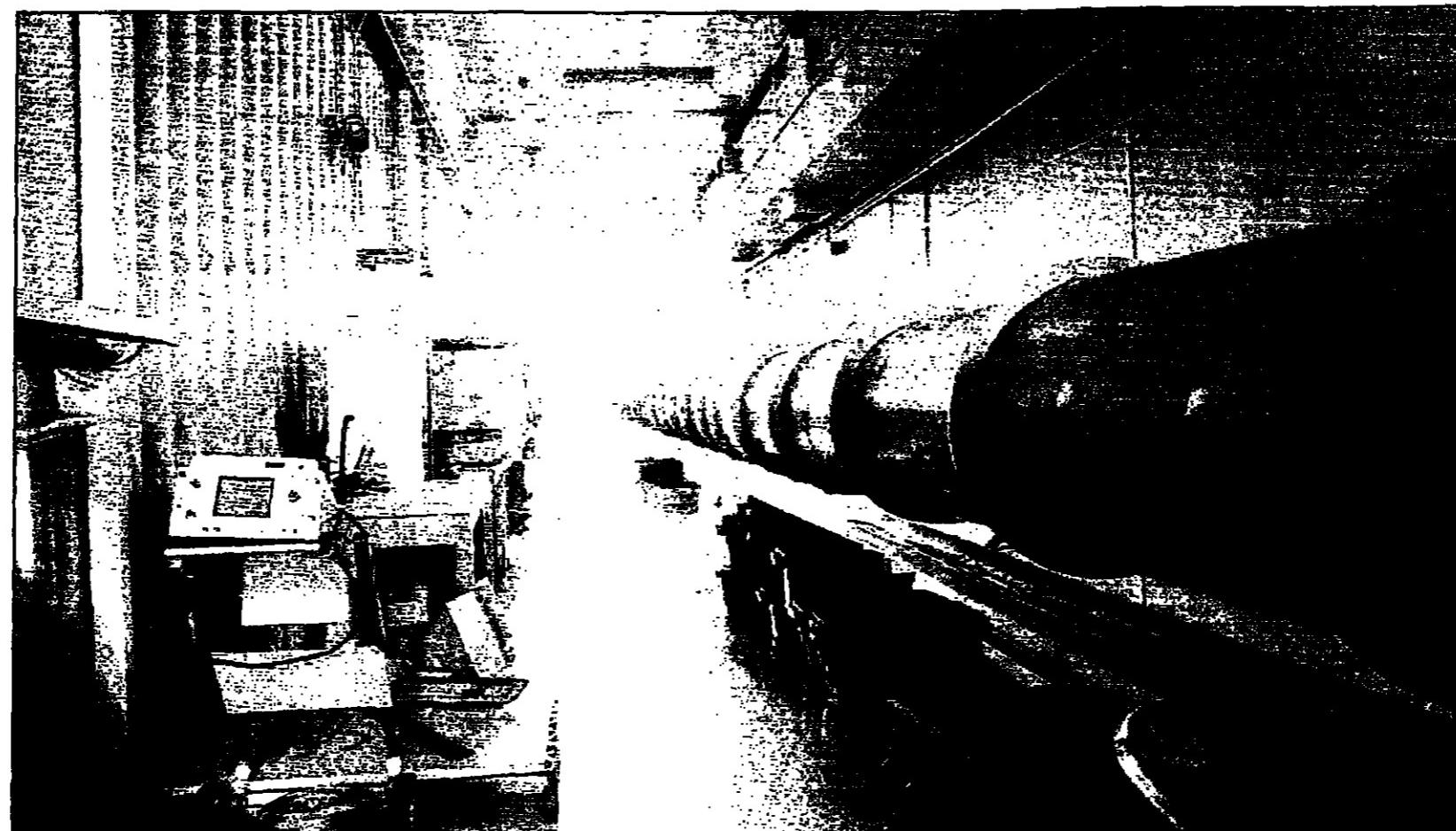
We have light waves, radio waves and, according to Einstein, we should have gravitational waves. Dan Falk reports on a multi-million-pound project that may finally prove the theory right

NO FORCE in the universe is more familiar than gravity. It keeps our feet firmly on the ground, it keeps the moon and planets in their respective orbits, and it keeps galaxies and clusters of galaxies bound in close-knit cosmic families. Some 300 years after a falling apple supposedly triggered Isaac Newton's first insights into gravity, you'd think we'd have it all figured out. And, to be sure, we do know quite a few of the details. Eighty years ago, Albert Einstein formulated the modern description of gravity - the general theory of relativity - and most of its many predictions were confirmed experimentally in the decades that followed.

But one key prediction of relativity remains untested. According to Einstein, a massive object, under certain conditions, should emit gravitational waves. These waves, a fall-out from the equations of general relativity, should be traversing the universe at the speed of light, emanating from any spot where massive objects are throwing their weight around. Because they're so weak, however, gravitational waves have so far eluded detection.

That may change in the early years of the next decade, when a number of gravitational-wave observatories begin operation. The largest of these projects consists of a pair of detectors now under construction in the US. The project is known as LIGO (Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory) and, if successful, will open a new window on the universe.

But what, exactly, is a gravitational wave? The best way to picture one is by analogy. Suppose you're standing by the edge of a pond. You lean over, put your hand in the water, and move it back and forth. The result is a series of waves that spreads out in a circular pattern. Just over a century ago, scientists found that electromagnetic waves work in a similar way: if you take an electric charge and move it back and forth (technically, you're accelerating it) then electromagnetic waves radiate outward in a similar pattern. Radio waves are one example of electromagnetic radiation; light is another. And, according to general rel-



The 40-metre prototype LIGO detector at Caltech, precursor to the gravitational-wave observatories now under construction

Photograph: Dan Falk

ativity, an accelerating mass produces gravitational waves in just the same fashion.

"In Einstein's language, gravity is associated with a warpage of space-time," explains Kip Thorne, a physicist at the California Institute of Technology. "So these gravitational waves are in fact a warpage of space-time." Gravitational waves, Thorne says, are like ripples in the very fabric of the universe, stretching and shrinking space itself as they pass by.

So why hasn't anyone seen these ripples?

The answer hinges on gravity's inherent weakness. Gravity, in fact, is weaker than the electromagnetic force by a factor of 10 to the power 39 (that's a one followed by 39 noughts). So while the motion of each of the planets around the sun, for example, would theoretically produce gravitational waves, the effects would be far too small to detect. Instead, the LIGO project will be on the lookout for gravitational waves from some of the most energetic phenomena in the universe - objects such as rapidly revolving pairs of neutron stars, colliding black holes, and supernova explosions.

Though gravitational waves still await

experimental detection, physicists already have good reason to believe they exist. Starting in the mid-1970s, two American astrophysicists, Joseph Taylor and Russell Hulse, made careful observations of a star system called a binary pulsar, which is a pair of small, dense stars revolving rapidly around one another. According to general relativity, the pair should radiate energy in the form of gravitational waves, and this, in turn, should cause the two stars to slow down in their orbits.

Over the years, measurements showed that the pair were indeed losing energy, and at precisely the rate predicted by the theory. Taylor and Hulse shared the 1993 Nobel Prize for Physics for their work.

"It gave unequivocal proof - in my mind, at least - that gravitational waves exist, and that they have the properties predicted by general relativity," says Stan Whitcomb, a physicist at Caltech who is the detector group leader for the LIGO project. "We know that the waves are out there."

But even detecting the gravitational waves from powerful cosmic sources such as binary pulsars will be a tremendous chal-

lenge. That's why the LIGO project, from the beginning, has been about size: even compared to the largest detectors being planned in other countries, the American project, administered by Caltech and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is a giant. The \$360m (£225m) project is funded by the US National Science Foundation.

Each of the LIGO detectors is being built in the shape of a giant "L" - two long, vacuum-filled tubes, 4km (2.5 miles) in length, meeting at a right angle. Quartz weights, each of 10kg (22lb) will be suspended at the end of each arm, and at the "elbow". Powerful lasers will send a beam of light down the length of each arm of the "L", reflecting off mirrors mounted on the weights.

Using an interferometer, the two laser beams are later combined into one. When gravitational waves pass by, one of the detector's arms will be momentarily stretched, while the other will shrink. That change in length will be very slight - about one hundred times smaller than the width of an atomic nucleus. That should be enough, however, to pull the two laser

beams out of phase and register a distinctive interference pattern at the spot where the laser beams merge.

By using two separate detectors - one in the state of Washington and one in Louisiana - any false readings at either location should be screened out.

The gravitational-wave detectors of the 21st century will show us a greatly enriched view of the cosmos. But, as with any new observing scheme, there will almost certainly be surprises. "It's not an instrument for the precise study of things that we already know about," says Whitcomb, "but a survey instrument to see things that we've never encountered in the past - signals that perhaps we're not expected at all." For it's worth pointing out that some people have suggested that rather than using radio or light waves to make their presence known, alien intelligences might signal their advanced state by communicating with gravitational, rather than electromagnetic waves. First, though, you have to catch your wave.

Dan Falk is a science journalist based in Toronto, Canada.

## TECHNOQUEST

### Elephants, giraffes and Shuttle trash

Questions for this column can be submitted to sci.net@campus.bt.com

**How big is the biggest elephant?**  
The Science Museum has records of an elephant that was 4.10 metres high and weighed an amazing 10.7 tonnes. But on average African elephants weigh around 5.6 tonnes, and are about 3.2 metres high.

**What is a planetary nebula?**  
Nebulae form at the end of a star's life. When a star runs out of its baseline hydrogen, it starts burning its waste - helium. This raises the temperature, and the internal pressure, which makes the star expand - but this expansion lowers the temperature and pressure, so the star's gravity makes it contract again. This cycle repeats until the star "pulses" rapidly, and begins throwing out its mass from its surface in a "superwind". It blows in gusts which rip the envelope of gas from the star in just 1,000 years. The expelled material forms an expanding shell of gas heated by a hot core. Astronomers call this a "planetary nebula" because, seen through a basic telescope, it looks like a planet with moons round it. The hot core looks like the central star of the nebula, which will keep expanding until it dissipates.

**How many vertebrae does a giraffe have?**

Our backbones are made up of several small bones called vertebrae. Even though a giraffe is much taller than we are, they have exactly the same number of vertebrae - just 24. The difference is, theirs are rather larger in every dimension.

**What do they do with rubbish on the Shuttle?**

Bring it all back, including what's in the toilet - except the urine, which is often dumped overboard. Rubbish is carefully stowed in containers and the US space agency Nasa is currently developing a "trash-compactor".

You can visit the Technoquest site at <http://www.campus.bt.com/Campus-World/pub/ScienceNet>. Questions and answers provided by 'Science Line's Dial-a-Scientist. 0345 600444.

## 'EXTRATERRESTRIALS ARE LIVING AMONG US'

NEWS OF THE WORLD

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## THEORETICALLY ...

**Dutch halt cloning research**  
No sooner had the scientists from Pharming, a Dutch biotechnology company, shown off their two cloned calves last

Friday than they were told by their government that the method used to create them would be outlawed.

The identical female calves, produced by the embryo nuclear transfer method first used in Britain to produce the cloned sheep Morag and Megan a year before Dolly, were front-page news in Holland. Pharming said the embryos were frozen before and after the cloning. But the Dutch Agriculture Ministry has decided to ban the technique. "The method has not been proved necessary. There is no scientific purpose," said ministry spokesman Paul van der Brug.

To which Frank Pieper, Pharming's vice-president of research and technology, said: "The knowledge we've gained

doesn't go away. We can still collaborate with other countries." The company has joint ventures in the US and Belgium.

**Hawking speaks for Clinton**

Stephen Hawking, the famous cosmologist, will address 160 guests at the second of President Bill Clinton's "millennium evenings" on Friday at the White House. The author of *A Brief History of Time* and Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge University will speak on "science in the next millennium". Aged 56 and almost paralysed by motor neurone disease, his lecture will be delivered via that familiar voice synthesizer. A glimpse of his opinions? "The next century will bring big changes. Most visions of the future show a society with very advanced science and technology, but in an unchanging state. I question this picture. I think it is more likely that biological and electron-

ic complexity will increase at an ever more rapid rate."

**Parkinson's gene discovery**

Gene of the week is one found by German researchers, who reckon they have found a second gene linked with the incurable brain illness Parkinson's disease. A study of three families with members who had the disease found a common mutation on chromosome 2, the researchers reported in this month's *Nature Genetics*. They said the gene "appears to be involved in the development of Parkinsonism closely resembling sporadic (non-familial) Parkinsonism including a similar mean age of onset (59 years)." The first gene linked to familial Parkinson's was only found last year, by an American team. Increasingly, it looks like Parkinson's has strong genetic components - but environmental causes are not ruled out.

**New clues on Alzheimer's**  
And another gene: thiope, for Alzheimer's. An American team, also writing in *Nature Genetics*, say the two genes (A and G) of the gene which controls production of the enzyme bleomycin hydrolase (BH), confer different risks of developing the degenerative brain disease. People with two copies of the "G" form have about twice the normal risk of developing Alzheimer's, according to the research. It's one of a handful of genes found since 1993 to be a risk factor for the disease.

So what does bleomycin hydrolase do? No one's sure. Yeasts have it, people have it, and one thing it does is activate a compound known as bleomycin, used in cancer chemotherapy. After that? Well, it affects your susceptibility to Alzheimer's ...

Charles Arthur, Science Editor

## Pre-teen mums - it's all down to diet

### TELL ME ABOUT ... FAT AND PUBERTY

**NEWSPAPERS aren't putting it on**  
when they express amazement that in the US and Europe girls as young as 10 can (and do) conceive and give birth to healthy babies. A century ago, it would have been unusual for someone so young to have begun menstruating, and incredible for a foetus to survive to term.

So what has happened? Despite what the *Daily Mail* may say, moral erosion is not the cause. Instead, it's economic prosperity, and with it the better diets - and especially fat-rich foods.

Why? Because in girls, puberty - the age at which the body decides it is biologically ready to reproduce - is apparently triggered by its fat content. Sustaining a developing embryo requires a lot of energy, which the mother's body must provide. Fat is the most energy-intensive form of food. The body has to collect that necessary store of energy before it can reproduce successfully.



Jenny Teague, Britain's youngest mum. Photograph: PA

enough fat to be ready to reproduce. As a result, the records for "youngest mother" have been falling in the US and Europe for years. Last December, Britain's youngest mother (pictured) gave birth aged 11: she had conceived aged 10.

In fact the link between fat and puberty may come down to a single gene - the so-called "fat gene", leptin, which leads to the production of a hormone that has been linked with obesity, and seems to regulate the level of body fat and appetite.

Last week researchers reported studies on a Turkish family which showed that where the leptin gene was mutated, not only were the family members obese, but their sexual development was disrupted too. One of the women never had menstrual periods, but family members who had one or no copies of the mutant gene had normal body weight and sexual development.

This "suggests that leptin not only controls body mass but may also be a necessary signal for the initiation of human puberty", said the researchers. So maybe it is fat first, then puberty. CA

Quite which comes first, the fat collection or the puberty, isn't completely clear: it may be that the hormones released in puberty accelerate fat collection.

Anyway, in modern Western societies, there are plenty of cheap, fatty foods available which will allow a young body to store

# The storm before Mr Calm



DEBORAH ROSS  
TALKS TO  
PAUL WILSON

OK, THEN, Paul Wilson, author of *The Little Book of Calm* – that teenie-weenie, pocket-sized thing that's been a major best-seller here for an irritatingly long time – let's cut to the quick. You're in the supermarket. You are, as ever, pressed horrifically for time. You've joined the queue which you think is going to be the fastest, but of course turns out to be the slowest. Then, the mad old lady in front of you suddenly decides she's going to pay for her single lamb chop with a mixture of milk bottle tops and out-of-date coupons for 10p off Persil. Inside, you are raging: "COME ON! COME ON!" Even: "COME ON! COME ON! YOU STUPID OLD LADY! I'VE GOT A STROKE TO GET HOME FOR!" Paul, what would you advise in these circumstances?

"Well," says Paul, who has great, Hollywood-mauve hair and is dressed entirely in beautiful, black Armani, "firstly, avoid queues". That's not entirely realistic, is it? "OK, secondly, allow twice as long as you think it's going to take. That way, your impatience won't get the better of you." And that's it? "It's simple. But it works," Paul? "Yes?" Have you every thought about bringing out *The Really Big Book of Calm*? "No. Why?" Well, then you could use it to crack the old lady over the head and have done with her. "I see," says Paul. He has quite a tight, pinched mouth for someone who is meant to be so relaxed about things. It tightens even more. I think he might think I am not entering into the spirit of things.

I can see why *The Little Book of Calm* sells. It's pale yellow and blue with a picture of a fluffy cloud on the front. It's the

relaxing as wearing no shoes at all"; investing in a well-stocked fruit bowl ("eat more fruit and you'll feel more relaxed – it's as sweet as that"); putting something ("share your life with a pet, and you'll have an appreciative assistant in your efforts to become calm"), plus lots more happy-clappy guff. "Smile, even when you don't feel like it." "Declare today a holiday" (I wish). Personally, I find more nourishment in a Kit-Kat, but a great many people go in for this sort of thing.

Paul's in the middle of a book tour. He's got a proper-sized, new book out, called *Calm At Work*. As part of its promotion, he's been giving talks up and down the country. I go to one held in a church in Piccadilly. I had expected to see a lot of sads in beards. Admittedly, there are one or two women wearing things that look terrifyingly hand-crocheted, plus a couple of men whose anoraks are significantly shorter than their suit jackets. But, mostly, the 100 or so who turn up seem quite a smart lot. Some are even laden with Tiffany and Fortnum & Mason carrier bags. They listen attentively to Paul's advice on breathing techniques – breath deep, breath slow, listen to your breath. They are told to sell their wristwatches, that stress is only about how you look at things, that "within everyone is the power to be calm".

Paul has a very slow, soft, relaxing sort of voice. It's hard not to doze off. Afterwards, there is a long queue for signed copies of his books. "So interesting," says a crocheted top. "So helpful," adds the short anorak. "Now, help me," I say to Paul, when we get down to the interview proper in a hotel. And I really do want him to sort me out. If he can.

Yes, I'm a terrible worrier. Hopeless. Every time I leave the house I worry I've left the iron on, even though I don't have an iron. I do the stress test at the beginning of *Calm at Work*. A reasonable score is 0-35. I get 145. I tell this to Paul. I tell him T'ai Chi is all very well, but it's a bugger when you're on the mobile. Perhaps I should write *The Little Book of Stress*, with a picture of a blue-lipped me after my stroke on the cover? What do you think? "I think you should learn to worry less." How? How? Tell me NOW!

Well, he says, most worries are future-oriented. They'll probably never come about. I'm wasting my time worrying about them. What I should do is write down every worry as it occurs to me each day – then, at the same time each day – say, 6.10pm, providing I haven't sold my watch yet – I should have 15 minutes of worry time. Chuck out the worries that are erroneous, have a good worry about the ones



Wilson's 'The Little Book of Calm' has sold more than 600,000 in the UK and has been a bestseller for more than a year

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Not the Devon Ilfracombe, but Ilfracombe in Queensland, in the Australian bush. Ilfracombe, he says, is the driest permanently inhabited place on earth. A couple of days of rain a year is considered good going. When he was growing up, rain was the cause of great celebration. He still loves rain, and the scent of rain. He takes a negative ioniser with him wherever he goes to give a room a "just rained, clean feel to it". I say I always take a packet of Dunhill wherever I go. This always gives a room a lovely, about-to-drop-dead-from-lung-cancer sort of feel to it. He gives me another of his pained, tight-around-the-mouth, little looks.

His father, Ron, was a truck driver. His mother, Kath, was a worrier. His father needed only to be a minute late and he'd been killed in a car crash. Paul wasn't such a worrier. Not back then, anyway. He liked to sit for hours under the acacia tree just outside the town. He liked the silence. He day-dreamed. He imagined. He was meditating, he says, although he didn't know it then.

When he was 11, he entered an Eisteddfod in Rockhampton, a town of 100,000. He entered not only the under-13s competition, but the under-15s and under-17s too. He was a boy from the bush, and didn't understand you didn't have to sign up for everything. He wasn't such an especially gifted trumpet player, he says, but he nevertheless won all the competitions. He did this by "imaging I was playing from a very calm place" before going on to perform. "Your imagination is more powerful than anything else," he says. In many ways, Paul's calm theories may just be dressed up, how-to-be-a-success-theories.

Paul eventually went into advertising. By 25, he was creative director of an up-and-coming ad agency. "I was responsible

for the company's creative reputation. I was responsible for a staff of 40 people. I worried all the time. It began to affect my health. At 25, I was getting palpitations, chest pains. Then the art director I was working with had a stroke. He was 32. That's what really brought it home to me."

He knew he had to learn to relax. He remembered what it was like sitting under that acacia tree, and tried to recapture that. He travelled to China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, to meet Buddhist monks and the like, and supplement his knowledge. He

thoughts, read the calming thoughts submitted by others. "I try colouring in. It's so relaxing," suggests Liz from Cambridge University, which makes you wonder about the standard of undergraduates these days. You can even e-mail a calm moment to a loved one. (I e-mail a calm moment to my loved one: "Select your company well. Mix with calm people.") He calls to say: "That's all very well, but meanwhile I'm stuck with you." I ask Paul if we don't all need some anxiety. In some ways, it may even be the motor that keeps us going.

**He takes a negative ioniser wherever he goes to give a room a "just rained, clean feel to it". I say I always take a packet of Dunhill for an about-to-drop-dead-from-lung-cancer feel**

started giving talks to other creative ad people about becoming calm. Someone suggested he should write a book about it. He wrote *The Calm Technique* – the biggest selling book of its type – then *Instant Calm*, which has also been an international bestseller. *The Little Book of Calm* was an offshoot from *Instant Calm*. As I was writing it, all these little thoughts came to me, which I thought would make a nice little book in themselves. Have the books made him very rich? "I am comfortable, yes, but I don't do it for the money."

His calm industry seems to just spawn and spawn. He runs a non-profit-making Calm Centre in Sydney, peopled by researchers and psychologists. There are no plans for *Calm, The Movie* as of yet, but there is a much-visited web site. Here, you can visit the meditation room, submit calm

Without it, what would stop us from lying on the sofa all day, watching *This Morning*, reading *OK!*, shifting only when the house is repossessed? I, for one, wouldn't do a stroke of work if it weren't for anxiety. He says I would. "Most people's approach is the adrenaline approach. Through fear, panic, deadlines, they force their minds into a creative state. This will work for a while, but not for ever. You burn out, or need increasingly strong stimulants to keep going." No, being calm does not mean being catatonic. "The calm I'm talking about is the inner quiet you find in, for example, great martial artists. They have huge power and energy, but it comes from a very calm state. Even more creative, actually."

OK, let's take Van Gogh, for the sake

of an example. Would he have been able to do what he did if he'd been a less wounded kind of chap? "Van Gogh is the world's greatest failure. He did all this work, but died never knowing if any of it was any good or not. He died a failure. He never sold a painting in his lifetime." Excellent paintings, though. "There is this sentimental argument that as he left a body of work behind, it makes it all right somehow. But it doesn't. It was irrelevant to Van Gogh, who had a very unhappy life."

I wonder, do you ever worry, Paul? "Of course. I am on the board of a hospital back home, and one is always worrying about resources." No, I mean a proper worry, like if I don't do my self-assessment form this week the house will fall down and my child will be taken into care and my legs will drop off and what's in the fridge? Do I need to get milk on my way home? Luckily, he says, his wife – who has given up work to look after their two young children – "looks after all that". I wonder, is she a 10-to-nine mum, like me? I'm lovely until 10 to nine. It's all who wants an egg? Who wants yummy porridge? But then it's 10 to nine and I'm screaming: "Shoes! Find your bloody shoes! It's swimming! Why didn't you tell me earlier it's swimming?" He says his wife does this too. "We've tried starting everything half-an-hour earlier, but it just doesn't work." So he doesn't have the answers to everything, which is encouraging.

I leave him quite late in the evening, and go out on to the street to get a taxi. It's raining. There aren't any taxis. I'm late. The babysitter is going to murder me. I do my breathing exercises. In-out, in-out, very slowly. I listen to my own breath. I find my inner calm. And only then do I rage: "COME ON! COME ON! YOU STUPID TAXI!"

*Calm At Work*, published by Penguin, £7.99.

**'I worried all the time. At 25, I was getting palpitations, chest pains. Then the art director I was working with had a stroke. He was 32. That's what really brought it home to me'**

sort of cloud you think you remember from childhood, from those long, perfect summer days that, of course, never actually happened, although it's soothed to think they did. The book is just 4in x 3in in size, costs £1.99, and is so cute it's almost edible. It tends to be stacked by the tills in book shops. It's the sort of thing you buy without ever intending to, like a Kit-Kat at the garage when you only meant to get petrol. So far, 607,245 people in the UK have bought it. (Usually, 100,000 is considered a bestseller.) It's been in the bestseller list for 57 weeks, hitting the top spot six times. Sales show absolutely no sign of abating.

Inside, the book is full of thoughts to inspire, moment-sized nuggets designed to set you on the path to inner peace. Apparently, the route to true tranquillity lies in wearing comfortable shoes ("almost as

that aren't, then stop. I'm not sure how this gets the mortgage paid, or my self-assessment tax forms filled in, but it sounds good. Frankly, I think a lot of what Paul says is just "cheer up, love, it may never happen", very cleverly marketed.

Paul, it should be remembered, is first and foremost a marketing man. He is head of an advertising agency in Sydney. This calm business is his hobby. His job is to sell things to people. He says to me later I shouldn't take the stress test seriously. "It's just a bit of a game, really. A bit of interacting to get the reader involved." A ploy? "Yes." Paul's not a con man. A bit vain, yes. "Any nice articles to show me?" he asks the PR girl from Penguin. He drinks water constantly because "it smoothes the skin". But he strikes me as a good bloke, mostly.

Paul Wilson, 48, was born in Ilfracombe.

summing resident wildlife along with the broccoli.) Our allergy-free status which has now been a source of maternal pride to me (all that obsessive breast feeding paid off) now appears to flag us up as a less than squeaky clean family. In fact all the children have a nighty bath – but their definition of bath may vary from yours and mine. The 11-year-old jumps in, smiles at the face cloth and jumps out again, while the 13-year-old spends at least an hour in the bathroom. If he ever introduced himself to the soap he would be the cleanest teenager in Britain but as

it is, from what I can make out, he lies there reading a book and boiling away my future grandchild. But the morning routine is where we slip up. The Montessorian school of child development believes in something called "windows of opportunity" – that there is an optimum time for a child to learn to do something, and if you're not careful you miss it and the window is closed. I can only think that I was so busy perfecting the children's psychological development that I missed the washing-your-face-in-the-morning window. We also missed the learning-

to-blow-your-nose window. Strange but true. None of my children can blow their noses. At times of deepest maternal insecurity, this is the one that keeps me awake at night – in years to come Oliver Sacks will probably write a study of them: *The Children Who Couldn't Blow their Noses*.

YOU WOULD THINK the children would be pleased to be allergen-free. Not a bit of it. They're all desperate to be allergic to something – I think they see as part of the package of modern childhood: trainers, Playstation and inhaler. And as I've given

on in on the first two, they think it can't be long before I break on the third. I had hoped to appeal to their *Newsround*-formed consciences on the trainers issue, citing Third World exploitation and immoral profits but I had not reckoned on the power of Nike. A shopping expedition with the 13-year-old is painful at the best of times – it's like having a stalker: he trails three yards behind to avoid the horrible possibility of anyone making a connection between the two of us. When trainers are involved I have learnt to vacate my body and hover above on another

spiritual plane, leaving boy and cheque book to argue it out. This time the 11-year-old insisted on coming along with his own agenda. He wanted to make sure his older brother got ones that weren't "sad" and would therefore reflect badly on him, but on the other hand were not so cool that they were better than his. Bless.

A FRIEND OF MINE learnt a valuable lesson this week. We were having lunch when her oldest son, who was ill, came downstairs looking pale and miserable. A few words of sympathy from his moth-

er and his two-year-old sister started screaming and crying. "What's the matter with her? Is she going to be sick?" panicked Sally. "I think you'll find," I said in my best experienced-mother-of-four, smug-psychiatrist tones, "that Daisy is just voicing her desire for attention". "Oh, do you think so?" breathed Sally in pathetically grateful mother-of-three tones, just as Daisy threw up the entire contents of her stomach into her mother's lap. And the moral is – never take advice from a woman whose children can't blow their noses.

**Squeaky clean, yes, but completely unable to blow their noses**



DINAH HALL

GOOD NEWS for grubby families. Clean children are more likely to develop asthma, according to researchers at the Institute of Child Health at Bristol University, who believe that those with less scrupulous hygiene practices develop stronger immune systems. (I don't know why they waste all this money on research when they could have my mother's home-grown wisdom for nothing. "You've got to eat a peck of dirt before you die" is a favourite saying of hers every time a fly drops off the fly paper into the mashed potato, or we object to con-

taminant resident wildlife along with the broccoli.) Our allergy-free status which has now been a source of maternal pride to me (all that obsessive breast feeding paid off) now appears to flag us up as a less than squeaky clean family. In fact all the children have a nighty bath – but their definition of bath may vary from yours and mine. The 11-year-old jumps in, smiles at the face cloth and jumps out again, while the 13-year-old spends at least an hour in the bathroom. If he ever introduced himself to the soap he would be the cleanest teenager in Britain but as

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# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Ministers lost in the welfare forest

The Prime Minister was without doubt one of those boys who was up all night swotting before the exams. He is a deadline-driven politician who leaves things to the last minute. Welfare reform is the most glaring example yet of his failure to think difficult issues through.

Before the election he made a number of grand and not necessarily comparable statements. One of the more important was (in this newspaper): "I see huge inequalities in wealth and opportunity and believe they should be corrected." Others were made less publicly, to the effect that lone mothers were feckless and the young unemployed should be forced to get off their backsides. Closer to the election Tony Blair delivered not policies but streamlined slogans: hand-ups not hand-outs; work as the best way out of poverty; a national childcare strategy. This broad-brush approach was good. It was quite right to drop the old left-wing assumption that tax-and-spend was the answer to all social ills.

But there was no detail. And since the election, there have so far been only gestures. The new prime minister made his first speech on a deprived housing estate in south London and talked of the multiple causes of "social exclusion". The Labour Party's most radical thinker in this area, Frank Field, was given a big ministerial post. Now, here was a man with a blueprint. But, though Blair liked Mr Field's rhetorical lines about family and duty, the detailed scheme was a Heath Robinson contraption that would never have worked.

So who did he appoint to cut this Gordian knot? Harriet Harman, an arch-moderniser who had lost the confidence of the Labour Party while failing to convince the wider public that she could do her sums.

After the public relations disaster of the vote to enact (next month) the Conservative cut in benefits for lone parents, Mr Blair took to the country to "sell" his welfare reforms. But what are they? All he has sold so far is the proposition that the present system is not working and that we should not be afraid to change it. Meanwhile, Ms Harman was asking her friends to rally round and save her job.

Little wonder, then, that the Government approaches the Budget in two weeks' time with its welfare policy in tatters. Last week we thought – for a moment – that Mr Blair had a plan after all; that the lone parent benefit fiasco had been a bad dream; that it was all going to be put right in the Budget and all poor parents – single, double, in work or out – would be better off. It did not take long to realise that this was a desperate bid by Ms Harman to spin a series of highly technical Budget options into a tapestry depicting her higher virtues. We can hardly blame the Social Security Secretary for resorting to the women's network in the face of such callousness from the old boys, but it would have helped if some involved in the great scheme for giving back with the other hand had been done correctly.

It turns out that, while lone parents in work will benefit – as had already been leaked on behalf of the Chancellor himself – from the new Working Families Tax Credit, new lone parents who choose to look after children (such as under-fives) at home will still be worse off from next month. Meanwhile, ambitious plans to give tax relief worth up to three-quarters of the cost of child care are highly tentative, and would not begin until next April at the earliest.

But this is only one part of the welfare reform forest where ministers cannot see the wood for the trees. The Government has a good story to tell on its ambitious plan to get the long-term unemployed off benefits and into work or training. It failed utterly to sell the imposition of university tuition fees as a measure of social justice to reverse the subsidy to the middle classes. And, as we report today, it will put up NHS prescription charges to £5.80, further undermining the principle of universal free health care for trivial revenue gain.

It is a miserable mess, although not ill-intentioned, and some progress towards a fairer society might be made by the time of the next election. But a lot of time has already been wasted, a lot of people have been needlessly offended (the disabled, pensioners and students) and one unkempt cut has been endorsed. Ms Harman should go, but Mr Blair should take the blame.

## A kiss is just a kiss...



He smoked but he didn't inhale. Now it seems the President and Monica Lewinsky kissed but didn't have an "improper relationship". Although the White House denies it. The same White House whose spokesman said there was "nothing innocent or simple" about Bill Clinton's relationship with Monica. That spokesman, Mike McCurry, then said he must have been "out of his mind" and that he was "in the doghouse" as a result of what seemed like a welcome outbreak of straight speaking. But neither statement, it has been noticed, amounted to a denial.

It cannot be long now before the tissue of half-truths and leaks is stripped away and something resembling the truth is told. The American press have been forced on to the defensive by an aggressive campaign by the White House, but not a single thing reported so far has been shown to be untrue.

Maybe it should not matter what the President gets up to in Oval Office above, but it has become part of a pattern of slipperiness from which Mr Clinton nearly escaped when he left the Arkansas governor's mansion, but against which he will now inevitably be judged.

He smoked but didn't inhale. They had a "physical relationship" but it wasn't sexual. He spoke but we couldn't hear. He is in office, but not in power.



Student power: undergraduates from Emmanuel College taking part in the annual Cambridge Rag Week. Last year more than £73,000 was raised for good causes

Photograph: Brian Harris. A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171-293 2534

### Murdoch's censors

THE SHAMEFUL treatment of Chris Patten's book, and of his editor, Stuart Proffitt, reveals much of how Rupert Murdoch's censorship works. However, that censorship's insidious nature has deep roots.

Two years ago, I completed my autobiography and sent it to my editor at HarperCollins, then my publisher. I had every reason to expect its speedy acceptance and publication. My friendly editor, Malcolm Edwards, had written to me on holiday in Cyprus commenting on an earlier draft, saying: "You have 85-90 per cent of a tremendous book."

At that time, HarperCollins was undergoing one of its purges. The purge, as far as an outsider can determine, left Malcolm Edwards in charge of fiction lists and Stuart Proffitt of non-fiction. An unprecedented four months' silence followed Malcolm's receipt of my manuscript. He wrote finally, a civil and rather despairing letter, saying that the sales department had decided that my book would sell only two thousand copies.

This is a self-fulfilling prophecy. When editors are ruled by the sales force and those above them, the atmosphere is poisonous for both authors and editors. I left HarperCollins in March last year. Shortly afterwards, Malcolm also left. Now Stuart has also gone. When such authors as Doris Lessing and Fay Weldon also leave, the sales force will have the place to themselves.

My autobiography will appear from Little Brown this autumn.

BRIAN WALDISS  
Oxford

IT APPEARS to be suggested by the media that the underlying reason why Chris Patten has withdrawn his book from HarperCollins is that the owner, Rupert Murdoch, did not wish to publish a book which might upset the Chinese government. This is apparently because Mr Murdoch has business interests in China.

This suggestion seems to me to be relevant to the question which was raised recently about the alleged predatory pricing of *The Times* newspaper. Officials of *The Times* have

been heard to say that the low price is possible because of the enhanced advertising revenue which results from the increase in sales. However, experience has shown that low pricing can be the result of an organisation employing a cross-subsidy from some other activity.

It is here that the need for a Monopolies Commission inquiry becomes manifest. Is the low price in truth justified by enhanced advertising revenues? Or is it achieved by cross-subsidy from other activities, such as those in China, or those of Mr Murdoch's TV empire generally? And is it because of the possible effect on a cross-subsidy from activities in China, that what happened in respect of HarperCollins took place?

Because of the importance of a free press the whole matter of a pricing and conduct of the Murdoch empire ought to be examined by the Monopolies Commission.

STEPHEN GRATWICK QC  
Sevenoaks, Kent

WOULD YOU please stop giving details of Rupert Murdoch's empire? Not only can I not bring myself to buy *The Sun* or *The Times*, or to subscribe to Sky TV, but now I cannot consider buying any HarperCollins books. My freedom of choice is being restricted.

JOHN PALMER  
Waterloo, Hampshire

### Countryside March

THE Countryside March has been funded by contributions from the thousands of people taking part and by the Countryside Alliance ("US shooting lobby funds countryside march", 26 February). The Countryside Alliance is funded by its members' annual subscriptions, by contributions from the hunting community via the Campaign for Hunting, and by donations and

fundraising events. One of these events was the recent auction at Sotheby's in New York.

While it is true that the American Masters of Foxhounds Association gave a generous donation to the Campaign for Hunting, as a gesture of solidarity, for which we are most grateful, there is no record of any contribution from the "US shooting lobby".

Similarly there is no truth whatsoever in the suggestion that the march has been "hijacked" by anyone, for political or any other reasons. The Countryside Alliance is not linked to any political party it is a moot point whether the country community is more distrustful of the present government than it was of the last.

What is important is that the most law-abiding section of our community is concerned, frightened, and getting very angry, and it should be clearly understood that the one issue that focuses this anger is the threat to hunting.

Lord MANCROFT  
Deputy Chairman  
Countryside Alliance  
London SE11

I KEEP two dogs, a collie and a lurcher. The collie is highly intelligent, contemplative and responsive. It eats meat but is so refined that it is incapable of killing. The lurcher is a simpler beast, a tad more primitive, but a superb hunter that could easily survive without me.

TODAY in our society most of us are collies. We eat meat but are emotionally incapable of killing. Instead we employ a minority of lurchers to breed, grow, kill and butcher our meat for us. Is it right that we should now seek to impose our collie values on these lurchers, whilst at the same time expecting them to continue to fill our plates?

I, a collie, love and admire my lurcher friends and feel shame that

although I enjoy roast chicken I cannot bring myself to wring its neck.

GEOFF STOVLAND  
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

LIFE would be much easier if the protagonists in the fox-hunting debate were more honest about their motives. Then the pro-hunt lobby would stop talking about rural employment and conservation and would admit that they like killing foxes because it's good fun; and the anti-hunt lobby would admit they hate fox-hunting because foxes are nice furry creatures similar to teddy bears or Wombles.

We could then get our genetic engineers to cross a slug with a greyhound and produce a slimy thing that ran very fast and would be fun to hunt, and nobody would care if it got killed.

PETE BARRETT  
Colchester, Essex

### Titanic errors

I WAS amazed that Alan Sanderson should seek to defend the reputation of his grandfather, Bruce Ismay (letter, 27 February).

As chairman of White Star Line, he must have approved of the decision to equip the *Titanic* with fewer lifeboat places than the total number of passengers and crew, contrary to the ship designer's original plan. This was legal at the time, but surely morally indefensible.

As for being "ordered into the last boat", it is on record that other first-class passengers, among them Mr and Mrs Strauss, owners of Macy's of New York, chose not to take up places in the lifeboats.

We cannot all rise to such nobility, but when we fail, a dignified silence in the face of adverse comment is surely the proper response.

DORENE BORRIE  
(Lady Borrie)  
Abbots Morton, Worcestershire

### Benny's one-liner

MY RECOLLECTION of Jack Benny's one-liner differs from Dudley Doisy's (letter, 27 February). Prompted by the mugger's repeated threat, "Your money or your life", Benny lazily replies, "Okay, okay – I'm thinking about it."

MICHAEL SHACKEL  
Sanderstead, Surrey

do not see this as a resigning matter!

"With respect, sir," I said, "you're being as if you were still in charge. Nobody is asking you to resign as an admission of failure. But there are other kinds of resignation besides resignation at the top. There might be pressure on you to resign in protest against what the man in charge is doing. Namely, Mr Rupert Murdoch. Or, as he is known inside the Vatican, Sir Rupert Murdoch."

There was a silence at this. I could have bit my lip. I should know better by now than to try jokes on Mr Major.

"I'll ring you back on this one," he said, and rang off.

When he does come back to me, I'll try testing his moral stance by asking him if he intends to resign from the MCC over their refusal to admit women, which he has publicly condemned. I'll let you know which way he jumps.

## Major and Murdoch – Will he pull the book? Will he see the story? Will he get the joke?



MILES  
KINGTON

IT HAS BEEN a very tense weekend for me. I haven't mentioned this before, but I have spent a lot of time recently working with John Major on his forthcoming autobiography (I do the jokes, he does the owing up and apologising) and so when this HarperCollins fuss broke, I naturally wondered if my cash-strapped little number had come to an end.

Mark you, the news reports did say that many leading writers were thinking of leaving HarperCollins protest against Murdoch's high-handedness, and that obviously wouldn't include John Major, who has never been thought of as a writer of any kind. On the other hand, publishers always think it's a great coup to secure the memoirs of the outgoing prime minister. (Not many people realise that the reason Rupert Murdoch is toadying up to Tony Blair, and vice versa, is so that HarperCollins can get first bite at the Blair

autobiography after he leaves Downing Street. Oh, yes, old Rupert plans way ahead.) So Major's book remains a big catch for Murdoch.

So I didn't want John Major withdrawing from the big league. Especially if I was still working with him. Anyway, I gave him a ring at the weekend to see how the land lay. Mr Major is still understandably cautious about being rung up, but we have a code we use to identify each other. It goes like this:

Major: Hello, Prime Minister speaking... Me: Not any more, I'm afraid, sir...

Major: My goodness, no, you're right!

We chatted about this and that (cricket, mostly) and then I popped the big question.

"So, what about this HarperCollins business, then?"

"Well," said the ex-premier, "thanks for the last lot of jokes, though I'm afraid I

didn't quite understand that one about Norman Lamont and the one-legged nun. Could you explain it again?"

"I'm not really talking about the writing of our book, sir. I was thinking about this fuss about Chris Patten and Rupert Murdoch."

"What's fuzz?"

"It was in all the papers."

"Not in my paper."

Of course, I remembered then that Mr Major gets *The Times*. So I found myself having to explain the whole thing to Mr Major, about how his friend Chris had had his book checked out by Murdoch's company because it was very rude about the Chinese top brass with whom Mr Murdoch hopes to deal, and how some writers were threatening to leave HarperCollins in sympathy.

"So you see, sir," I said, "this puts you in a situation of some delicacy."

"I see," said Mr Major. "You mean, I will now have to go through my book taking out all rude remarks about the Chinese?"

"Not really," I said. "What it means is that you may have to reconsider your position."

"Oh, come on!" said Mr Major. "When I was in politics, that was shorthand for thinking about resigning!"

"That's what I'm talking about."

"Resigning from what?"

Patiently I explained that some people might expect him to take his book away from HarperCollins, partly in protest against Murdoch's dictatorship, partly in protest against the presence of an illiterate capital C in the middle of the word HarperCollins.

"Why should I resign?" said Mr Major hotly. "I have done nothing wrong! I

## Now that the windows are all smashed, what happens next?



PAUL  
VALLEY  
CUNNING  
BANKERS

It is axiomatic at international gatherings that the more diverse the group, the more bland the statement at the end of the meeting. Which may explain why a group of 30 of the world's leading religious figures conjured up a communiqué at Lambeth Palace the other day which was positively soporific. After all, it did have to encompass the worldview of the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Taoist faiths, not to mention one of the most unfriendly of religious dogmas that of the free-market economists of the World Bank.

The meeting was hosted jointly by Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank. Its subject was the relationship between religion and development. Its delegates included a variety of luminaries from the Crown Prince of Jordan to the head of the Vatican's Justice and Peace pontifical commission and a Lutheran bishop who is a member of the Masai tribe. You might be forgiven for wondering if it was all a massive PR job. Certainly one of those present in the meeting voiced such a concern. Wasn't it all window-dressing? asked the Hindu, Dr Vandana Shiva.

"You've smashed all our windows," was the devastating reply from Wolfensohn who went on to acknowledge that the Bank's Structural Adjustment Programmes had not always been sufficiently conscious of the need to protect the Third World's poorest people. The rest of us knew this. Too often, also, its medium-term policies were in conflict with the short-term exigencies of the approach of the International Monetary Fund. Too often, in addition, its grandiose schemes for dams and power stations further enriched the wealthy caste in poor countries, or increased trade or GDP, but did nothing to help the really poor.

Now here it was repenting, in private, before the world's religions. What was going on? "We used to arrive and look at a country purely economically," said one senior Bank official. "As governments have lost their legitimacy so people have turned to faith and the social contract has been renegotiated. It is the religions which stand between the state and the market – both of which people don't fully trust – as communities which are trusted, which link the macro and the micro, and which protect the interests of the poor. Give us a year and we'll show you something new." The risk, of course, is that the religions may find themselves being used merely to add spectability to an unpopular secular agenda. But, just perhaps, something worthwhile might emerge. It is a risk worth taking.

the official. "Everyone in this room can mobilise millions of people." The faiths had three strengths denied to the powerful self-consciously secular Bank. "They have the moral authority to stand in the public square and denounce corruption. They have detailed knowledge of what goes on at the grass roots. And they have effective organisations and delivery systems." As if to prove the point at that moment a diminutive figure in bright orange robes padded by. "Have you seen the Aga Khan?" he asked. He was Swami Vibudheshna Teertha, one of India's most senior Hindu monks. His fate determines the economic, transport and education policies in 1,250 villages and towns and hundreds of primary and secondary schools.

Even so there are many back at the World Bank who regard Wolfensohn's latest idea as "flaky". They took a similarly dim view of his insistence, after he took over in 1995, that the top 400 of its 10,000 employees each had to go and live in a Third World slum for one week. That was why the concluding statement was so bland. "We wanted nothing too emotional or laden with the vocabulary of faith which those back in Washington could dismiss," said one of the drafters.

The plan now is to set up a number of joint Bank-Faith action groups alongside exemplary practical projects. The Bank wants to finance the training of Buddhist monks in reconciliation skills in Cambodia. In Anandpur, where the Sikh brotherhood



A gap to be bridged: Wolfensohn (left) and Carey  
Photograph: PA

was founded in 1699, a project is to be encouraged to control the growth of the town in a way which embodies Sikh values, using solar power and recycled waste as energy sources, developing alternative transport mechanisms and setting up 5,000 light industrial units which only produce environmentally-sustainable goods.

"This is a post-E Enlightenment world, not a post-religious one," said one senior Bank official. "As governments have lost their legitimacy so people have turned to faith and the social contract has been renegotiated. It is the religions which stand between the state and the market – both of which people don't fully trust – as communities which are trusted, which link the macro and the micro, and which protect the interests of the poor. Give us a year and we'll show you something new."

The risk, of course, is that the religions may find themselves being used merely to add spectability to an unpopular secular agenda. But, just perhaps, something worthwhile might emerge. It is a risk worth taking.

## Sadly for Mr Blair the copyright he craves has already been claimed



TOM  
SUTCLIFFE  
AN ALIBI FOR  
PLEASURE

In 1824 construction began on a pleasure dome on a site between Albany Street and Cambridge Terrace, on the fringes of Regent's Park. It was eventually to be called the Colosseum and it was conceived on a suitably grand scale. Designed by a young architect called Decimus Burton, its central feature was a rotunda with a dome 30 feet wider than St Paul's and 112 feet high at its apex.

There was no controversy about what it would contain. It had been specifically constructed to house what was then the largest panorama ever painted – a 134 foot diameter depiction of the view from the very pinnacle of St Paul's (the painter, a topographical artist called Thomas Horner, had actually constructed a hut above the cross and ball of Wren's cathedral, mounted on precarious-looking scaffolding). No less than 46,000 square feet of canvas were to be covered with a meticulous representation of every street, facade and rooftop visible from that vantage point.

By contrast with the Millennium Dome, of course, the Colosseum was a relatively modest enterprise – its expanses of daubed canvas a mere pocket-handkerchief alongside the prairie of Teflon-coated fabric which will soon be hoisted into position south of the Thames. But if the architectural dimensions (not to mention the building costs) show evidence of inflationary pressure there is still a kind of kinship between Horner's enterprise and Mr Mandelson's great adventure.

When the contents of the Millennium Dome were unveiled last week, to the accompaniment of a bracing sermon from the Prime Minister on the virtues of positive thinking and the vice of cynicism, it was striking to see how traditional they were. The carcass of the exhibits might look futuristic and the inner-workings might be technologically advanced but the essential spirit – that of improving spectacle – strikes a much more venerable note. Its showmanship is essentially Victorian and almost every exhibit strikes some kind of echo with the didactic attractions of Victorian London.

Take Wyld's Great Globe, for example, a commercial spectacle constructed where Leicester Square is now situated. This huge hollow sphere carried on its inside surface a relief map



Back to the future: moderniser or Victorian?  
Photomontage: Mark Hayman

of the world (constructed from 6,000 plaster casts – the Victorians were as fond of breathtaking statistics as we are today). Spectators entered through Antarctica and could view the surface of the world – including the satisfactory evidence of expanding British dominion – from a series of viewing platforms. The Great Globe was so unimpeachable a

sensation of knowledge as a grand day out with the added bonus of self-improvement. The Victorians were peerless at the creation of such diversions, in particular at exploiting the way in which information could provide an alibi for pleasure.

This was a period, too, when a place of public resort could be called the Poly-

### Labour is as Victorian a government as we have had for years in its moral sternness and occasional fits of priggishness but they have a problem in galvanising historical glory

recreation that even that most extreme fundamentalist Philip Gosse took his son Edmund to see it, just as, one imagines, dutiful parents will guide their children through the carefully de-sexed colossus that will house the Dome's Body Zone.

Browse through Richard Atick's wonderful account of Victorian entertainment, *The Shows of London*, and you are repeatedly struck by the same blend of education and recreation that characterises the Dome exhibits, its pre-

technic Institutes (their big draw being a diving bell in which intrepid visitors could undertake a total immersion experience) and when the oxyhydrogen microscope – a device which could project magnified slides – was as indispensable an attraction as a virtual reality headset. Sometimes the desire to feed the public's appetite for edifying novelty took rather peculiar turns – as with Richardson's Rock Harmonicon, an instrument modelled on the xylophone

and constructed (over a period of 13 years) by a Cumberland mason, who carved each stone key until it gave the right tonal response to being whacked with a mallet. The repertory included extracts from Beethoven, Rossini and Haydn and the instrument was played by Richardson's sons, who billed themselves as "the Original Rock Band". Had they been around today they would almost certainly have been invited to a Number Ten drinks party.

And if the Dome is essentially Victorian in its attitudes – a cathedral to technological optimism and social improvement – it is surely consistent with the overall moral tone of the current government. Listen to Tony Blair in almost any speech and you can hear the exhortatory prose of Samuel Smiles, the very first guru of self-help. "It is the men that advance in the highest and best directions, who are the true beacons of human progress", wrote Smiles in an essay on *Character*. "They are as lights set upon a hill, illuminating the moral atmosphere around them; and the light of their spirit continues to shine upon all succeeding generations".

Change a few words here and there and you would have a Blair speech about Britain's role in the world, gleaming with inspirational lighting effects. Even the rather preachy invitation to look upon the future with muscular confidence have their counterparts in Smiles' positivism: "The habit of viewing things cheerfully, and of thinking about life hopefully, may be made to grow up in us like any other habit", Smiles wrote in his best-seller *Self-Help*. "It was not an exaggerated estimate of Dr Johnson to say, that the habit of looking at the best side of any event is worth more than a thousand pounds a year." Hoping to persuade journalists to look at the best side of the Millennium event, Blair struck a very similar note of bootstrap philosophy.

In my view this isn't necessarily a bad thing – you have to go a long way to find a society as dedicated to the idea of steady amelioration as the Victorians, or a time in which there was such optimism about the susceptibility of human problems to the energy of individual citizens. Some of it was misguided, some of it mendacious, but we've coasted on their legacy through a large part of the current century – using but not repairing their drains, allowing their rail networks to die back from a branching profusion, impoverishing their galleries and museums.

If we are to succeed in the next millennium there are far worse models we might look to. When the 1951 Festival of Britain was in full swing much was made of the historical coincidence of another Elizabethan age. Past historical glories were enlisted as a galvanizing example for future efforts. The only problem for the Labour party – as Victorian a government as we have had for years in its moral sternness and occasional fits of priggishness – is that they can't easily do the same thing. Someone else beat them for the copyright on Victorian values.

## Why William was a Good Thing... unlike Bad King John



GLENDA  
COOPER

Cleanliness, the scientists now say, can be rather unhealthy. You have been warned

It is news that will cheer the heart of every tousled-haired, dirty finger-nailed, black-kneed kid around. William Brown has finally won. Dirt is good for you. A survey by the Institute of Child Health in Bristol University has found that grubby children may be their mothers' despair but they are in fact healthier.

Scientists have discovered that children who bathe daily (and wash their hands more than five times a day) are 25 per cent more likely to have asthma than their dirtier friends. And those who bathe least are the healthiest of the lot. The explanation that the ICH have come up with for this is that washing at an early age may have a direct effect on the

the receiver, she was stunned to hear Harry say, "Hello, could I speak to Harry Evans please?" Word circulating around the Law Society is that the Lord Chancellor is seeking to move the start of the legal year from October 1st. The ostensible reason? The fancy dress parade that accompanies this annual judicial milestone will clash with this year's Labour Conference. However, the rumour goes, there is some resistance to the postponement from both the legal profession and the Labour Party. Neither would be exactly heartbroken if Lord Irvine was occupied elsewhere.

**Fundamental Christians in the US have proclaimed a new "Eleventh Commandment" for the Clinton White House. "Thou shalt not put thy rod in thine staff."**



British documentary filmmaker Nick Broomfield's investigative epic about the suicide of Kurt Cobain, *Kurt and Courtney*, finally got its premiere screening in San Francisco on Friday evening. This followed Courtney Love's success in having the film yanked out of the Sundance Festival in January. "She sent a last minute threatening letter to the Roxy

of obsessive washing. The Roman empire did absolutely fine, conquering most of Europe and seemingly invincible until they started concentrating on Roman baths, and then suddenly it was Nero fiddling while Rome burned and making his horse a senior member of government.

The other famous bather of the ancient world is of course Cleopatra, who it was said liked bathing in asses' milk for her complexion. The practice may have made her one of the most famous lovers in history but it clearly lost her the kingdom.

Cleanness is not necessarily next to godliness. As *1066 And All That* puts it, one of the cleanest kings of England was Bad King John who "demonstrated his utter incompetence by losing his Crown and all his clothes in the Wash". If he'd just fished them out of the linen basket to see if they'd do another day, the whole tragedy might have been averted. The book also darkly hints that the Order of the Bath was seen as an extreme form of torture in the Middle Ages.

Cleanness has of course not had the best press when it comes to psychological matters. Think for example of Lady Macbeth. It's popularly assumed that her sleepwalking and obsessive handwashing springs from guilt over Duncan's murder. Sadly it's more likely the spur was that Lady Macduff might be passing rumours that the new queen has dirty fingernails, which is why

she wails that "all the perfumes of Araby will not sweeten this little hand". (It's now also believed that Ophelia didn't commit suicide but lost her balance after over-vigorous application of a loofah during some extra-mural bathing).

No, a little bit of dirt did no one any harm, as Just William can testify. While his arch-enemies the Hubert Lanetics were languishing on their beds sick with only an improving history book to keep them company, William and the Outlaws were out saving the day, getting five shilling rewards and munching through endless slices of layer cakes. A smattering of grubbiness is a small price to pay for what sounds like a vastly more exciting life.

The Government is due to publish a series of White Papers on Lifelong Learning in early 1998, from the DfEE, Scottish and Welsh Offices. This one-day CVCP conference will explore the role for universities in developing and implementing the Government's proposals. Universities already play a significant role in lifelong learning, providing courses at all levels – HND, undergraduate, PhD and CPD. How will the developments announced in the White Papers affect this role? In particular what changes will be needed in universities' management, access, curriculum and funding? How can higher education generally develop its interface and partnership with further education to deliver the flexible learning opportunities that lifelong learning demands?

The conference is for senior managers in higher and further education, academics, careers advisers and training and personnel officers in business and funding organisations.

### Speakers include

Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment  
Diana Warwick, Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals  
Professor Bob Fryer, Principal, Northern College (Lifelong Learning Advisory Group)  
Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, MD and VC, British Aerospace Virtual University

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Pandora

## Geoffrey Bush

IN HIS life as a musician, Geoffrey Bush combined a whole-hearted dedication to teaching and to musical scholarship with a notable career as a composer, together with a range of behind-the-scenes activities particularly for the Performing Right Society Members Fund, the Composer's Guild and the John Ireland Trust.

Bush spent five impressionable years as a chorister at Salisbury Cathedral, from 1938 to 1943, an experience which left him with a detailed first-hand knowledge of, and lasting love for, the English choral tradition. It also inspired him to compose, though, when he moved on to Lancing College, Jasper Rooper demanded self-criticism, and Bush destroyed everything he had written to that date. "Looking back," remarked the composer, "I rather regret my lost innocence."

His dedication to composition resulted in lessons with the composer John Ireland, with whom he remained a lifelong friend until Ireland's death in 1962. Later he became Musical Adviser to the John Ireland Trust. Ireland encouraged him to enter – successfully – for the Netherton Scholarship in composition at Balliol College, Oxford, where he succeeded George Malcolm in 1938, though his studies were interrupted by the Second World War.

A pacifist – and later supporter of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship – during the war he became Assistant Warden at the Hostel of the Good Shepherd, Tredreger, in Monmouthshire, looking after difficult evicue children, in an area of startling deprivation. During this time he wrote much music, including the puppet opera *The Spanish Rivals*, later produced at Brighton in 1948 and for the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Most of this music was later withdrawn, but a violin Sonata eventually achieved publication. When Bush returned to Oxford immediately after the war, as a Masefield Memorial Student, he was regarded as the composer in student circles. The composer Joseph Horovitz has warm memories of the Sonata, which made so strong an impression he even now remembers whistling it in the street. Despite its youthful romanticism, it retains its appeal.

Geoffrey Bush spent his life championing British music, as scholar and teacher. Yet his lectures on 20th-century music, which inspired many generations of first-year BMus students at King's College London, showed a wide first-hand knowledge, and no special pleading as far as British composers were concerned, though possibly his regard for Prokofiev and Shostakovich was apparent. (Several students remember his generosity with Mars bars as an accompaniment for their studies of modern music.)

Bush's career as an educationalist started as a lecturer with the Oxford University Extra-Mural Department between 1947 and 1952. He then moved to the Extra-Mural Department at London University, with which he was associated, in various capacities, for over 40 years (Staff Tutor in Music 1952–64; Senior Staff Tutor 1964–80; Music Consultant 1984–87). He once, in all seriousness, told me he was overpaid as a teacher but underpaid as a composer.

He was a wonderfully sympathetic person, remarkable for his equable temperament

and urbane intelligence. His lectures gripped his students, and no one ever felt Bush was talking down to them. He was selflessly devoted to the PRS Members Fund, which he chaired for 11 years.

Bush was visiting Professor at King's College London for 20 years, where he was appointed by Thurston Dart in 1969. A firm champion of adult education, he was also the moving spirit behind the London University External Diploma in the History of Music, and was the active instigator of the Society for Diploma-holders from this course, which year celebrates its 24th season.

His activities extended outside London, to the Extramural Centre's Summer School at Westonbirt, for many years. The critic Robert Layton remembers playing through Schumann's Piano Concerto with Bush on a second piano as early as 1948. Later the end-of-course pantomime assumed legendary status, with Bush year after year being the prime mover, writing cabaret songs in great haste and playing them all. On these occasions another of his passions would become evident – Broadway musicals.

Geoffrey Bush was a stern critic of his own earlier music. Yet his list of works is substantial, dominated by songs, including a dozen sets or cycles for voice and piano, and others for instrumental or orchestral accompaniment. One or two, especially his settings of "The Wonder of Wonders" and "Sing No More Ladies", have achieved almost classic status.

His six operas were all written with an eye to practical production, most notably his setting of John Drinkwater's play *X=O*, becoming a grippingly drawn pacifist opera, *The Equation* (1967). The remainder of his output was varied, encompassing some 21 orchestral works and music for piano, smaller forces and organ. His choral works, both unaccompanied and with small orchestra include the widely sung *Christians Cantata* (1947) and the delightful *Summer Serenade* (1948), settings of *Vivaldi*'s "The Wonder of Wonders" and "Sing No More Ladies", have achieved almost classic status.

He was widely known as a pianist, and in Oxford at the end of the war accompanied the soprano Sophie Wyss. He was appointed as organist at St Luke's, Chelsea, in succession to John Ireland, in 1946. Later he appeared as accompanist to his own songs, and recorded a range of them for Chandos in 1981.

His sympathetic book *Musical Creation and the Listener* first

appeared in 1954, while two vol-

umes of essays, *Left, Right*

and *Centre* and *An Unsentimental Education*, followed in 1983

and 1990, including autobiog-

raphy and material previously

published or broadcast talks. His

voice is unmistakable, particu-

larly his precise mode of ex-

pression, throwaway humorous

remarks, and occasionally

waspish asides.

A lifelong fan of detective

fiction, he collaborated with

his friend the composer Bruce

Montgomery (more familiarly

known as "Edmund Crispin") in

the story "Who Killed Baker?"

Bush had never known his

father, Christopher Bush, and

always longed to do so; recently

he had been thrilled to dis-

cover that he had published a

detective story.

To mark Geoffrey Bush's

70th birthday the Songmakers

Almanac promoted a Wigmore

Hall concert. The programme

was a typical spectrum of his

enthusiasms, and was styled "A

Celebration of English Song

1850–1990", including his own.

The hall was packed and Bush

went on stage dressed charac-

teristically in a bright red

pullover and sporting an equal-

ly bright yellow bow tie. No one

present could believe the an-

niversary this youthful and

energetic figure was celebrating.

Lewis Foreman

Geoffrey Bush, composer and

teacher; born London 23 March

1920; married 1950 Julie McKeown

(two sons); died London 24

February 1998.

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# Small caps to steam ahead as blue chips slow

WEEK AHEAD



DEREK PAIN

AT LAST second and third liners have come to life. After trailing miserably behind their blue chip peers in the long bull run, they have picked up an increasingly powerful head of steam.

Although the mid cap index has hit 14 peaks this month it was not until the last two days of last week that it really started to challenge the gap which has opened up with the Footsie. The FTSE 250 index closed on Friday at 1,849 compared with 4,886.15 it opened February. The mid cap performance has been mirrored by the small cap index which is also standing at a new high.

Mind you, second and third liners often perform well in the early months of a year. The array of New Year tips, inevitably concentrating on the smaller fry, is one influence; tip sheets with their tendency to highlight tidbits also seem to have a greater impact be-

fore the year starts to get stale.

This time round there have also been the conversion windfalls; the soaring shares of the former building societies and Norwich Union must have encouraged many to cash in at least some of their chips and extend their portfolio.

NatWest Securities believes it is now possible to make a case for the mid and small caps. Says Bob Semple and David McLean:

"The valuation case has turned against the large cap stocks. Footsie has outperformed despite achieving slower earnings growth than either the small or mid caps sectors. Looking ahead the small and mid cap sectors are expected to record faster growth than the large caps but more importantly they now stand at a significant p/e discount".

Many fund managers regard straying outside blue

stocks as hazardous. They are fearful of being caught by the lack of liquidity in many mid and particularly small cap shares.

Still, the under valuations which exist in the mid and small caps have been underlined by the rush of takeover activity. The possibility of a bid sent Trust Motors soaring 55.5p to 195p on Friday.

It is difficult for the mid and small cap indices to outperform Footsie. High flying financials represent nearly 30 per cent of Footsie with the more depressed engineers accounting for just 6 per cent. Financials make up 10 per cent of the undercard indices and engineers 25 per cent.

NatWest suggests investors trawling through the mid and small caps should look at financials, such as Britannia, Northern Rock (due to go into Footsie) and United Assurance; on the property pitch it goes for MEPC and Slough

Estates. Others on the NatWest buy list include Barratt Developments, Northern Foods, Hazlewood Foods, BBA and Cobham.

This week's results are again dominated by blue chips. Financials are to the fore with Halifax producing its maiden year's figures. Underlying profits should emerge at £1.64bn against £1.43bn. The dividend should go up by around 18 per cent to 17.5p a

share and there is a strong possibility the sleeping giant of the banking world will indulge in a handsome cash hand-out, probably through a special dividend.

Other money groups reporting include Royal & Sun Alliance (£800m expected against £403m) and General Accident, already on the merger bandwagon following its deal with Commercial Union. About £500m, up from £421m, is likely.

BTR is one blue chip to miss the fun. The shares were above 400p in 1994; they closed last week at 161p after touching 152p, a 70 per cent under-performance.

Rolls-Royce, the aero engine group, should offer a sharp profit advance, from £220m to £274m; non-Footsie Vickers, seeking to sell its Rolls-Royce car division, is on line to produce 74m (£33m).

Enterprise Oil will show the scale of the strong pound, lower production and higher costs and should announce net income of, say, £100m against £142.5m.

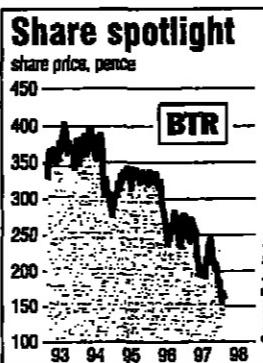
Other blue chips reporting

dividend will be cut. BTR is being reshaped by Ian Stratton who has undertaken an extensive disposal programme. It is floating off its Australian interests and is looking for buyers for such diverse operations as glass and plastic bottles and building products.

BTR is one blue chip to miss the fun. The shares were above 400p in 1994; they closed last week at 161p after touching 152p, a 70 per cent under-performance.

Some famous mid cap names feature in a busy week. Inchcape, the international trader, should offer £180m, up £15m, and Hanson, the building materials rump of the old warrior conglomerate, is seen as checking in with year's figures of £220m.

Hillsdown Holdings, the food group which may well signal the flotation of its house-building operation, should check in with profits of £156.5m, a £6m advance, and Cookson, the industrial materials group, could achieve £177m against £166m.



## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earning (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptional. Div/P is Bloomberg Dividend. Other details: Ex rights x Dividend; S-Suspended; A-Article; P-Parity Paid; NP-Not Paid; \*APL

Source: Bloomberg

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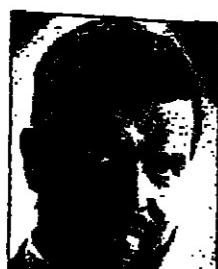
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GAVYN  
DAVIESON WHETHER  
MONETARY  
POLICY IS  
TOO TIGHT

## Are the central banks risking global deflation?

THERE has been a great deal of discussion recently in the financial markets about whether global monetary policy is too tight. This has been triggered by a series of different events – the recent decline in commodity and producer prices around the world; the increase in real short-term interest rates, triggered by declining price inflation; fears of outright deflation in Japan and the rest of Asia; and the contractionary impact of rising real exchange rates in the OECD economies. The fear among some analysts is that the global central banks may be inadvertently setting monetary conditions so tight that deflation becomes a genuine possibility.

Up until now, there has been very little evidence that global monetary conditions are too tight. The growth in real broad money in the major economies has been accelerating sharply in recent quarters, and it is now running at almost twice the rate of growth in real GDP. Narrow money aggregates are also showing robust and accelerating growth for the OECD economies. Furthermore, the rapid increases in leading indicators which we are observing in both the US and the EU certainly do not seem to imply that monetary conditions are overly restrictive.

Admittedly, it is true that real short term interest rates have risen quite markedly in the G6 economies in the past year. Nevertheless, the level of real short rates at present (2.5%) is still roughly 0.5% below the average for the previous decade, and the impact of any increases in real short rates has been more than offset by declines in real bond yields over the same period. The real 10 year bond yield in the G6 economies now stands at about 2.7%, which is more than one standard deviation below the 4.0% average which has been observed over the past 10 years.

The key question for the developed economies is whether these accommodative

readings for domestic monetary policy will be more than offset by the contractionary impact of appreciating real exchange rates. This question is, of course, best answered by looking at monetary conditions indicators (MCIs), which combine short-term interest rates, bond yields and exchange rates into a single index.

Up until now, the indices which have been published based on this methodology have suggested that OECD monetary conditions have not only eased very substantially in the last three years, but have attained levels in absolute terms which are towards the easiest end of their normal cyclical range. These indices have therefore offered no support to those analysts who have argued that global monetary conditions are too tight.

However, these MCIs have until now been based on standard trade weighted exchange rate indices (TWIs), as published for example by the Bank of England and other central banks. These indices have typically excluded emerging market currencies, which is of course potentially very misleading. In order to solve this problem, Stephen Hull of Goldman Sachs has now calculated comprehensive exchange rate indices for all of the major currencies, including all of the rel-

evant emerging market currencies. Because of the recent collapse in Asian currencies, these new indices have appreciated much more than the old ones, and this implies that monetary conditions in the developed economies have tightened much more than was previously believed.

In particular, based on the old or conventional exchange rate indices, the MCI in the United States stands only 0.7% tighter than its 1987-95 average. By contrast, on the new exchange rate index, US monetary conditions are estimated to be 2.5% tighter than average, and – more worryingly – they are now tighter than at any time over the past ten years.

No doubt some analysts will argue that this indicates that monetary conditions in the G3 are unnecessarily tight, and that there should therefore be a bias towards renewed easing by the Federal Reserve and other central banks.

This assessment will be further strengthened by the fact that the Taylor Rule (a mechanistic way of determining the optimal level of short-term interest rates via a relationship with output gaps and inflation) now indicates that monetary policy in the G3 economies is too tight.

As can be seen from the accompanying graph, the recent decline in inflation across the developed world has reduced the optimal level of short rates implied by the Taylor Rule very significantly. Actual short rates are now well above their optimal level in both the US and Japan, while in Europe actual short rates are about optimal.

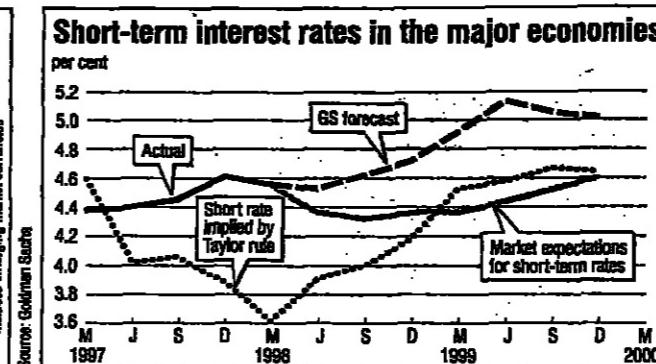
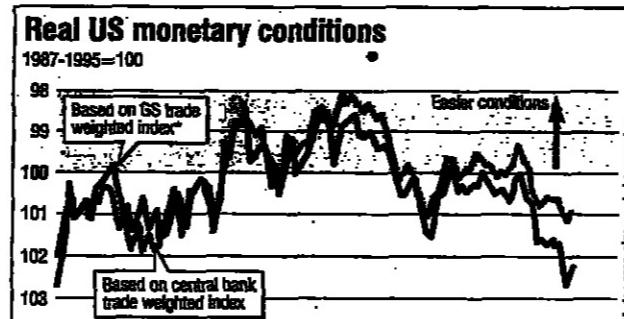
For the OECD as a whole, the Taylor Rule suggests that the current level of short rates is almost 100 basis points too high, which is an unusually large discrepancy. This will undoubtedly add strength to calls for interest rate cuts in the major nations in the months ahead, especially in the United States. However, there are a series of arguments which point in the other direction, and which the central banks need to take into account. These are the following.

First, the main reason why monetary conditions in the major economies have tightened in the last twelve months stems from the collapse in Asian currencies. Obviously, to the extent that the shift in MCIs for developed countries is triggered by a change in exchange rates, we would expect this to be offset by an easing in MCIs in the rest of the world (where currencies have depreciated), leaving monetary conditions for the entire globe approximately unchanged.

Second, to the extent that the recent collapse in the real exchange rates of the Asian crisis economies is a temporary event, the accompanying tightening in OECD monetary policy will also be temporary. It may not be appropriate to ease domestic monetary policy in the developed economies in order to offset this temporary factor. This is particularly the case in the United States, where virtually all indicators of domestic demand currently remain strong. As Alan Greenspan recently argued in his Humphrey-Hawkins testimony to Congress, the tightening in real monetary conditions which has occurred in the United States in the past twelve months was "not inadvertent" – i.e. the Fed has intended to put a brake on the economy to offset the strengthening in domestic demand, and does not now sympathise with calls to reverse this intended policy tightening.

Third, although real monetary conditions have tightened in the OECD in the latest 12-month period, the impact of this may have been offset by two countervailing forces – an improvement in the terms of trade for the developed economies as oil prices have declined, and a sharp increase in the value of global stockmarkets, notably in the US and the EU. Goldman Sachs has recently added stockmarket valuations into its MCI calculations, and this eliminates most if not all of the "monetary tightening" which has been triggered by the rising dollar in the last 12 months.

Ultimately, the proof of this particular pudding will be in the eating. For as long as domestic demand indicators in the US and EU remain robust, and leading activity indicators continue to rise, then the central banks will probably resist the temptation to reduce domestic interest rates. And they will be entirely justified in doing so.



### Allied backs off Dewar's bid

DRINKS and pubs giant Allied Domecq has withdrawn from the bidding war for Dewar's, the whisky brand which Grand Metropolitan and Guinness were forced to put up for sale in the wake of their merger, which formed Diageo. Allied was not prepared to pay more than £600m for the brand, which is America's most popular whisky, but the asking price has risen much higher, and the business is now expected to fetch around £800m. Seagram, the Canadian drinks group, is also reported to have pulled out of the auction, leaving Pernod Ricard and Bacardi as the frontrunners.

### Astec investors go to court

MINORITY shareholders in Astec (PSR), the electronics group which is fighting off a takeover bid from majority shareholder Emerson Electric, will embark on their long-awaited legal action this week. The institutional investors accuse Emerson of acting with unfair prejudice for attempting to remove three executive directors from Astec's board and cease dividend payments. The shareholders had delayed their legal action to give Emerson a chance to open up a dialogue, but no discussions have been held. They have received the support of the Association of British Insurers, which said: "It is important that the rights of minority shareholders are fully preserved."

## Stores risk big bill for home shopping

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

SUPERMARKETS which introduce home delivery services for customers risk increasing their costs without gaining a long-term competitive advantage, according to a report published today by the retail consultancy Corporate Intelligence.

It says that while the first companies to introduce such schemes enjoy short-term gains

these quickly disappear as rivals copy them. The report also warns that while home shopping is likely to prove popular such schemes mean that supermarket operators risk cannibalising sales in their own supermarkets. "A drop in the number of store visits would also mean the stores missing out on the lucrative impulse buys which they have courted so assiduously," warns Corporate Intelligence's Robert Clarke.

Start-up companies which

have no stores do not face this conundrum and have been growing rapidly, according to the report. It adds that Food Ferry, which started offering free home delivery from 30 stores for transactions over £25 and within a five mile radius, Iceland is now offering free home delivery in all outlets on orders over £25. Many of the supermarkets are testing schemes whereby customers order their goods by phone, fax or internet and then collect the shopping from the store.

### BTR close to £1.5bn sale of packaging business

BTR, the reformed conglomerate, is believed to be close to selling its packaging division to Owens Illinois, the US glass manufacturer, for up to £1.5bn.

Owens has long been the front runner in the race to buy

the business, which BTR put up for sale last year as part of its attempt to become a lean engineering group. However, the sale is thought to have been held up by competition concerns. A successful sale would be timely

ly for Ian Strachan, BTR's embattled chief executive, who will present the company's annual results to the City on Thursday. The strong pound and turmoil in emerging markets is expected to trim profits

to £1.1bn. However, the proceeds of the disposal would give BTR enough financial firepower to spend up to £1bn on its long-promised share buy-back programme.

— Peter Thal Larsen

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مكتب العامل

# Barred: the best person for the job



Asian barristers often don't get work because solicitors — even Asian ones — pander to the prejudice of their clients. Romasa Butt recounts her own story of fighting against racism

**STUDIES** in America have shown that Asian children often do better at school because they come from a culture which believes that you have to work hard to be successful. That ethos has recently been satirised by such television programmes as *Goodness Gracious Me*, co-written by Meera Syal, who was made an MBE in the New Year's Honours list. Fans of the programme will recall various sketches depicting Asian "over-achievers". Some of them are even going to Oxford at the age of nine! So we are told that there are a disproportionate number of Asians running around with trunks full of degrees and professional qualifications. One may ask where they all are when we look at who occupies the top positions in society.

Let's wind the clock back to graduation with hordes of fresh-faced Asian graduates armed with their degrees. What do we do now, says one idealistic and naive over-achiever? Cash in on them, says another over-achiever. So they go off in search of the best jobs. One of them ends up at the Bar and thinks, right, now the world is my oyster — we've all heard that barristers earn a sackful of money.

Fast forward to 10 years later. Female over-achiever arrives at chambers and is told by her clerk that he has just received a call from a solicitor who wants to instruct counsel for a complicated fraud trial at the Old Bailey. Faithful solicitor says he thinks Asian female over-achiever is the ideal choice based on her knowledge, experience and proven track record. Faithful clerk phones solicitor and puts forward ideal choice and recounts her success rate etc. Solicitor is impressed and asks for name of counsel and realises that faithful clerk is recommending a female who does not brandish a pukka English name. Solicitor says that she will not do as the client has given her strict instructions that he wants a male brandishing a pukka English name.

Although the client reserves the inalienable right to choose counsel it cannot be based on any stipulation which is contrary to the law, ie on grounds of sex, creed or colour. Faithful clerk asks solicitor the reasons for the stipulation by the client. He is told that the client is of the view that the

case is far too serious and weighty a matter for a female and that he stands a better chance of being acquitted if the person representing him is "white". So, Asian female over-achiever is dumped in favour of a male, brandishing a pukka English name with less experience.

Anyone who has done jury service will tell you that the client's fears are completely unfounded and that the whole supposition is claptrap. The fact that counsel must wear a wig and gown in court ensures that you are, as counsel, sexless and colourless.

So what does she do? She has a number of options. She can forget it and accept the fact that she has been defeated by good old-fashioned ignorance as there will always be people like that and hope that not everyone is like that, or she can do something positive about it: she could get her clerk to call the solicitor and remind him/her that it is their duty not to pander to such requests as it is clearly contrary to the law.

In the case of a weak solicitor this will probably result in the client going to another firm who will pander to his request. In any event the weak solicitor will have money reasons for wanting to pander to the client's request. A better solution for all concerned is to take the bull by the horns. This has been proven to work. The faithful clerk arranges a conference with the ideal counsel, in this case the Asian female, when the client's fears will be allayed and he/she will realise how ill-conceived preconceptions are.

In a society which is driven by competition so that only the fittest survive, there has to be a presumption that all are competing on a level playing field. To the author's mind, although the above scenario is a real one, it is impossible to take part in the race if your arms are tied behind your back and your legs tied together. It's like spending years training for the Olympics only to find that when you are at the starting line for the 100 metres hurdles you can't jump over the first hurdle because your arms and legs are tied together.

The reason why this particular scenario is of interest is because the solicitor and client concerned are Asian! This new glass ceiling has been put there by Asians who don't want to be represented by fellow



Smashing the Asian glass ceiling. Millie (Amrita Dhillon) from 'This Life'

Asians because of preconceptions of ability based on sex and colour. This is not always true in all areas of the law but is felt increasingly as the cases become more challenging, with greater sums of money involved and invariably they are of greater complexity. These areas are traditionally the bastions of the male species.

Sadly this is not the first time that the author has encountered this. Less than 12 months earlier she was representing two defendants charged with a serious offence. One was Caucasian and the other Asian. The Caucasian wanted to be represented by a male and the Asian by a Caucasian. Physically, counsel represented the most undesirable package: female and non-Caucasian.

Fortunately, the solicitor did his job and stuck to his guns and a conference was arranged with counsel on the basis that I was the appropriate person for the case. The Caucasian client saw sense and I represented him but the Asian client still preferred to be represented by a Caucasian. For reasons I won't go into I could represent only one of them and the Caucasian chose me and the Asian client was represented as he wished.

On the first day of the trial the Asian defendant realised that he had made a mistake in the choice of counsel when his was unable to marshal all the facts and files. The adage, "What you want isn't always what you need" seems appropriate. During the trial, what the jury took on board was my preparation, not the fact that I was female or the colour of my skin. What is sad is that during the trial the Asian defendant came to me and said that he had made a grave mistake. It was a mistake which ultimately may affect his liberty, though of course by then it was far too late for it to be rectified.

It is time to untie those arms and legs put there by preconceptions. I am very fortunate to have the full support of my clerk and head of chambers, who encourage the breakdown of such silly notions.

Romasa Butt is a practising barrister in the chambers of the Rt Hon Denzil Davies

## Partnership plans that don't add up

Plans for new limited liability partnerships must move towards the US model, says Jim Gemmell

LIMITED liability is an issue that has been exercising the minds of many partners in both legal and accountancy firms as the risk of commercial failure has become all too real for some

back in the event of insolvency. Partnerships will also be required to produce audited accounts. In comparison incorporation seems almost idyllic. The situation in the United States is very different. The law on joint and several liability in respect of claims was changed and a system of proportionate liability introduced last year. Almost all the states now have limited liability partnerships. To become an LLP, the partnership simply files a statement that it had become an LLP with the requisite authorities and advises clients and suppliers. It must make sure that the letters LLP are printed after its name on all stationery and make appropriate press announcements. For the US LLP there is no minimum capital requirement, no financial disclosure and no claw-back or guarantees.

US professionals can, of course, still be sued individually under their equivalent to the partners' own negligence but, otherwise, the US LLP structure means that the partners' private assets are secure from claims on the LLP. The UK LLP too, will not protect the negligent partner.

Despite the litigious nature of US business, the balance of advantage seems to have moved significantly in the direction of the US professional. The UK LLP proposals need to be rethought. The rethink should concentrate on two key areas:

There would be significantly more onerous liabilities upon insolvency for partners in LLPs compared with those which apply to the shareholders in limited liability companies. In addition, there is no need for clawbacks and guarantees — a fixed minimum capital is all that is required.

Historically, the professional bodies were set up under an Act of Parliament or by Royal Charter with the principal objectives of serving the public interest. The partnership model has worked tolerably well in that context over many years, with an ethos based upon balanced advice and fine judgements; not as a platform for decisions solely concerning the financial advantage of the partners. That is a reason why the good partner is valued by his clients. Hence, growth rates, profits before tax and earnings per share have clear merit for the financial well-being of the shareholders, but they should not be the sole determinant of success for the professional firm. For these reasons, and others, it is essential that the partnership model, properly managed in the public interest, should be perpetuated.

The planned UK model for the LLP, however, is unattractive to the professions. While the shareholder of a limited liability company is exposed only to the extent of the share capital, the limited liability partner is to be required to put up a guarantee of between £25,000 and £100,000 per partner. Furthermore, any excessive earnings will be subjected to a claw-

James Gemmell is Chairman of Horwath Clark Whitehill, Chartered Accountants. He was also Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's Working Party on Auditors Liability.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

FAX: 0171 293 2505

## APPOINTMENTS: LEGAL

### Spring Collection

#### PRIVATE PRACTICE

**Commercial Lit.** c. £60K  
City: Small practice with top clients base seeks litigator 2-4PQE. Work could include L&T, PI, professional indemnity or IT. Marketing skills essential; knowledge of French useful.

**Property** to £25K  
City: Firm with national presence seeks commercial property lawyers NQ-SQE to handle disposals, acquisitions, investment portfolios and some corporate support.

**Corporate** to £25K  
City: US firm, well established in London seeks corporate finance lawyers 3-5PQE with broad City exp to handle work arising from blue chip domestic/international clientele.

**Know-how** to £25K per year  
City: A number of firms seek lawyers from 2PQE to join as full/part-time information providers and precedent drafters on corporate, property, litigation, EU competition or tax.

**Prof. Indemnity** to £25K  
West End: Well known firm seeks solicitor 2-4PQE with good insurance litigation exp to handle defence indemnity work in busy team, dealing mainly with claims handling work.

**Personal Injury** to £25K  
West End: Market leading firm with top notch insurance company clients seeks a solicitor 2PQE+ and a legal executive with at least Ays' exp to deal with personal injury/RIBA cases.

#### PRIVATE PRACTICE

**IP/Media** to £25K  
City: The following specialists sought to join renowned team: senior IT lawyer; senior patent litigator; non-contentious media lawyer. NQ-3PQE, music litigator 2PQE+.

**Planning** to £25K  
City: Properly department of large dynamic firm urgently seeks planning lawyer with good environmental knowledge 2-4PQE and a strong academic pedigree to join busy team.

**Commercial/IT** to £25K  
City: Large firm seeks specialist lawyer 2-4PQE to handle procurement contracts, FM, software licences, distribution agreements, and general commercial contracts.

**Corporate Tax** to £25K per year  
City: Senior lawyer 3PQE+ sought for partner designate role with major circle firm. Must have first class training and experience as well as a possible potential clientbase.

**Private Client** to £25K  
City: Highly selective firm seeks top City trained lawyer 1-3PQE+ on behalf of high profile clients of high net worth individuals.

#### IN-HOUSE

**IT** to £25K+ bonus  
London: Leading consultancy seeks IT lawyer 2-4PQE to assist its business sectors in drafting, reviewing and negotiating contracts and providing ad hoc advice. Self-starter essential.

**Engineering** to £25K+ bonus  
M. Gosselin: Lawyer aged 30-40 years with good commercial contracts exp ideally in the oil, gas, engineering or construction sectors, sought by leading international company.

**Shipping** to £25K+ bonus  
City: Lawyer NQ+ with shipping/litigation experience sought by leading P&I club to handle a range of claims work. Good interpersonal skills essential.

**Bankers/Banks** to £25K  
London: Lawyer 2PQE+ sought by busy team to liaise with the business line, credit dept & back office from day one. Knowledge of SDA, cross currency, currency options & equities.

**Co/Co** to £25K+ bonus  
HSBC: Leading telecoms company seeks Co/Co equivalent trained lawyer 4-5PQE with a broad range of experience to join both construction and planning matters desirable.

**Banking** to £25K+ bonus  
City: Leading bank seeks 2 lawyers, one with retail banking exp including consumer credit, the other with corporate banking, to join teams within its legal department.

#### REGIONS INTERNATIONAL

**Corporate** to £25K+ bonus  
Brussels: City firm seeks dynamic senior lawyer with gravitas and marketing skills to head up practice. Language skills and knowledge of the European legal scene essential.

**EC/Corporate** to £25K  
Milan: City firm seeks junior and senior Italian qualified lawyers fluent in English from good Italian firms. Exp of EC law/Italian corporate law and a Brussels stint preferred.

**Employment** to £25K  
Brussels: Name firm urgently seeks specialist 3-5PQE within term acting for a range of blue-chip clients.

A more senior candidate with following will also be considered.

**Shipping** to £25K+ bonus  
City: Committee International firm seeks dry shipping/insurance litigator 3-4PQE to join its trade and transport team. Superb location; ideal for City solicitor tired of commuting.

**Property** to £25K+ bonus  
Hausler: Telecoms company seeks first commercial property lawyer 4-5PQE, to take over its property work. City training and exp of both construction and planning matters desirable.

**Litigation** to £25K  
City: Committee: Top firm seeks specialist litigators NQ-SQE to handle property (1954 Act), banking (insolvency/enforcement) or general commercial litigation.



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LLOYD  
JONES  
LEGAL RECRUITMENT

For further information  
about these positions, or  
to discuss the various career  
options available, contact:

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Lynne McCorroll  
Deborah Knowles  
Andrew Nelson

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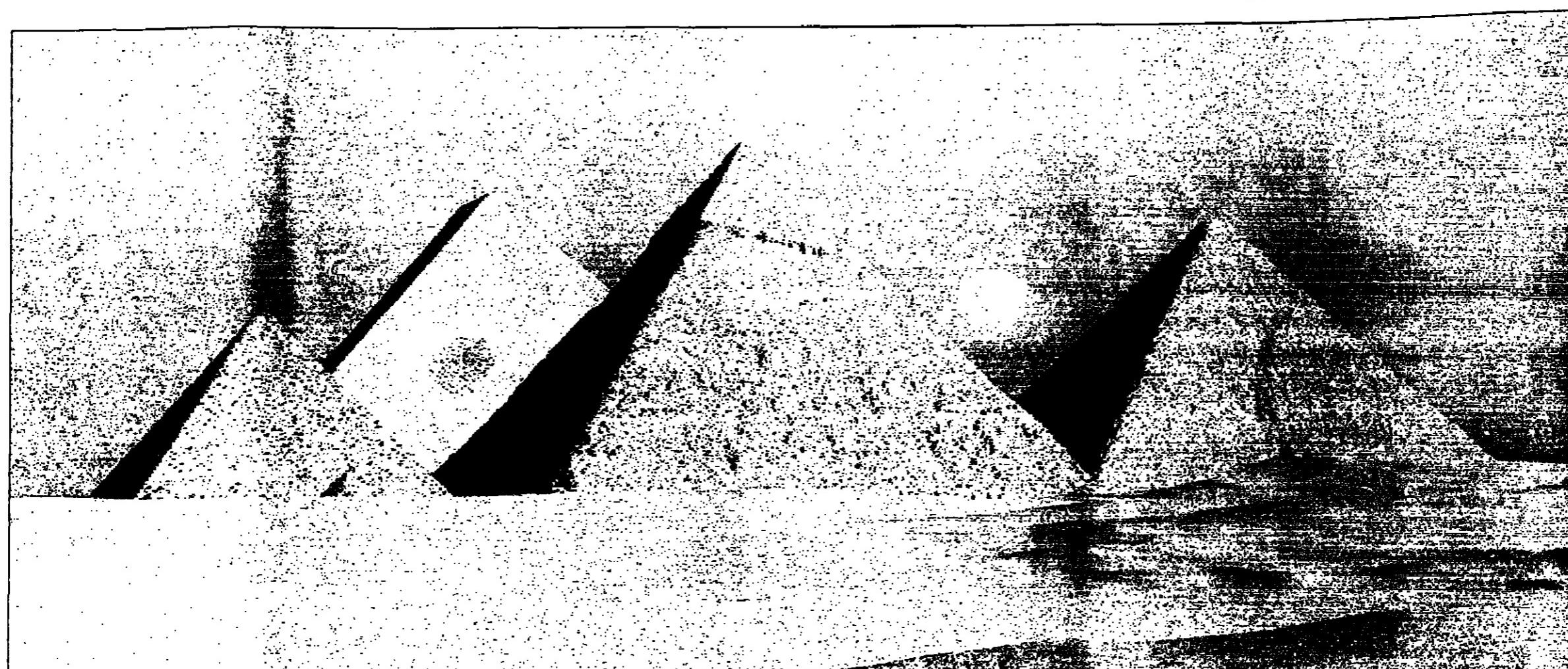
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Berkley Square  
London W1X 8LB  
Tel: 0171 493 2903  
Fax: 0171 493 3877

# Power of the poster reveals a bigger picture



How times change: A poster campaign for Benson & Hedges in 1977 by the advertising firm Collett, Dickenson, Pearce; below left, a poster by Great Northern Railway to promote trips to Skegness; and Savile Lumley's 1915 image to help recruitment in the First World War

Courtesy of V&A

## SKEGNESS



## IS SO BRACING

Illustrated Guide from Secretary, Advancement Association, Skegness, or any LNER Enquiry Office.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3547, Monday 2 March By Purtis

**ACROSS**

- 1 Defiant about soundbite I (13)
- 10 Endurance shown by one in difficulty (9)
- 11 Refuse to be extravagant (5)
- 12 Increase level we're told (5)
- 13 Extra try before Dutch get caught (9)
- 14 Light shades are works of art (7)
- 16 Loudly denounce most of the Franco-German articles (7)
- 18 Forbidding gold set to be moved about (7)
- 20 Could start with expert study into voice modulation (7)
- 21 At that point mounted immediately (9)
- 22 English duke triumph over Northumbrian king (5)
- 23 Fight to retain key weapon (3)
- 25 Fly out of line of the sun (5)

**DOWN**

- 2 Self-possessed young man? (9)
- 3 Make one measure energy (5)
- 4 Heavy metal turning up in load (7)
- 5 Decline to disagree in speech (7)
- 6 Dogged reporter? (9)
- 7 Opera tenor gets acting award right away (5)
- 8 Pointed to medical group's dishonesty (5,8)
- 9 Sensitive to proposed housing centre (6-7)
- 15 Cricket teams join drug society to get a break (9)
- 17 Neil gets confused with an odd plant species (9)
- 19 Directions given to leave nothing on the grass (7)
- 20 Be able to work with brilliant star (7)

24 Port in Mexico we sailed to (5)

25 Horrible soldiers beat small number held inside (9)

26 He's so ignorant of development that's low cost (2,1,10)

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## From Toulouse Lautrec to Saatchi as exhibition hails 120-year history

By Kate Watson-Smythe

THE V&A is to open an exhibition dedicated to the power of the poster and will feature some of the most famous images of modern times – some of them in full size – offering an overview of the social trends of the last 120 years.

The exhibition will include posters from Toulouse Lautrec to Saatchi and Saatchi, and from "My Goodness My Guinness" to the notorious "Hello Boys" Wonderbra campaign.

The posters, many of them international, are taken from the museum's collection of more than 10,000 originals.

A spokesman for the museum said: "The poster is a very important art form and the exhibition will show its strengths and what makes it such a powerful medium of design, publicity and persuasion."

The exhibition will be divided into three sections, Pleasure and Leisure, Protest and Propaganda and Commerce and Communication.

It will examine their role in society: from children and teenagers plastering them all over their walls in an effort to stamp their own personality on a bedroom to companies' reliance on huge billboards to draw attention to their products.

The performing arts have inspired some of the greatest poster designs such as Lautrec's paintings for the cafés of Mont-

martre and those for the London music halls. It was drawings such as these, dating back to the 1870s, which first prompted posters to be hailed as street art.

But the poster has also been used as an instrument of persuasion and governments and pressure groups have used it throughout the twentieth century to inform and provoke.

Some of the earliest examples were Savile Lumley's "Daddy, What did YOU do in the Great War?" and Fougasse's "Careless Talk Costs Lives". More recently Saatchi and Saatchi have produced controversial election posters such as "New Labour

New Danger" for the Tories.

The poster is viewed as an effective and inexpensive means of protest and has been used to further many causes from votes for women to animal welfare and ban the bomb.

Perhaps the most sophisticated use of posters is in advertising. One of the most memorable in recent times was the series of posters for Benson & Hedges cigarettes. But some of the most controversial have proved the most successful, including Wonderbra and Benten.

The exhibition opens on 2 April and runs until 26 July.



Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?

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